

Interview with Josh Zuckerman

By Jason P. Freeman

Coming Out from Under

Josh Zuckerman is nothing but gay in his second album

Without pretense, Josh Zuckerman is the gay everyman of recording artists. With his light rock/country sound and honest lyrics, Josh isn't prone to play into the industry's standards set by pop-culture pretty boys. Unlike many other "metrosexual" musicians, hiding blunt gayness behind waxed hair and lies, out-n-proud Josh sings, "I don't give a damn, as long as I am true to who I am," in his sophomore album, *Out From Under*. And, evident by the album's title track holding first place for many weeks on the Sirius Out Q Radio Hot List, audiences everywhere love him for it.

But what's not to love? A seemingly easy going T-shirt and jeans, cookie loving kind of guy ("I love cookies!" he says) from New Jersey, Josh's magnetism doesn't come from over the top sensationalism, but from simply being Josh. It's a principle he abides by both in his person and in his music, reminding us all the power and freedom when we just "be real."



JPF: From your Web site, it looks like you've been performing for almost 10 years.

What has been keeping you going and motivated for the last decade?

JZ: My love of music. It's a passion that just doesn't seem to go away.

JPF: You've been out and openly gay since day one. Did you ever think to keep your personal life private in order to get stronger mainstream consideration in the music industry?

JZ: At first I was nervous about it, but now I feel it's part of the path that I'm on, and I feel it's my responsibility to be true to myself in order to show others that it's OK to be themselves as well. There is nothing wrong with being gay and/or being you.

JPF: That's kind of like your *Out From Under* music video following the attempts at love by a geeky looking dude who hits on a lesbian and ends up with famed NYC drag queen Hedda Lettuce. What was the message were you relaying when producing that video?

JZ: It was a tongue and cheek video that just depicts that love can be found no matter who or what gender you are.

JPF: You're currently residing from New Jersey.

Have you been there your whole life? Where would you want to be if you weren't there?

Chicago maybe?

JZ: I think somewhere in California—I really love the weather out there. But I do love Jersey! Although the thought of living close to Oprah sounds great too.

JPF: So when you're not rocking out, what are you into?

Being in New Jersey, I imagine you like to fix pick up trucks and go to Monster Truck rallies.

JZ: Actually, I like to work out at the gym and I love New York City, so if I get the chance, I like to go there—as well as travel the world.

JPF: Some of the songs in this album seem to be addressing some individual.

When writing the music for *Out from Under*, was there anyone in particular you were thinking about?

JZ: Yes, it was actually written about a famous guy in Sweden that I fell for and was obviously in the wrong but it ended up being a good thing, because the title song came from that experience ;)

JPF: And that leads me to the next question: You're hot.

People want to know, how old are you and are you single?

JZ: I am single at the present time and I am as young or as old as you need me to be.

JPF: My favorite song on the new album is Authenticity. What's yours?

JZ: Thank you! That is a fun song. Mine is Be Real, because it is really the motto for my life lately. I try to remind myself this as much as possible, to just be Josh and be myself!

JPF: What's next for you Josh?

Where do you see yourself in five years? Five months? Five weeks and in the next 5 minutes?

JZ: I see myself making music, releasing more CDs, traveling and performing to more and more people, and making differences out there in more people's lives! In five weeks, I will be exhausted from finishing up the month of September.

In five minutes, I'll be at my computer. I have lots of emails to respond to.

JPF: And finally, Josh Zuckerman, what's your favorite LGBT arts, entertainment and culture website?

JZ: ChicagoPride.com!

Editor's Note: The interviewer promised Mr. Zuckerman a cookie if he responded with "ChicagoPride.com" in the last question. Josh requested chocolate chip.

See more on Josh Zuckerman at www.joshzuckerman.com