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David Dees reveals his beautiful soul

artcat@fastmail.com - Tuesday, 31 May 2016 2:50 PM



Hello again,

I wrote that Katman D was playing the Neil Young tribute, whoops, forgot to tell you that that is actually me, sort of my alter ego I guess.

The gig was yesterday, will try to write up the whole surreal experience. First off, there are people who love Neil Young's music so when my friend Mr. Hess, who is the manager told me there was big interest in the show with reservations at the Belle Fiore winery filled completely up, I was both delighted and worried. This show is at the most high end winery and estate in the whole valley <http://www.bellefiorewine.com/> and after playing years of sleazy bars and sleepy nursing homes it sort of seemed like I was at the mountain top, and also because it actually is on the mountain, the winery overlooks the most beautiful wine valley you can imagine.

Before the show the girl who seats people pointed to the chart and said to me, 'we are full up, are you nervous?' I told her not at all, but it had just not hit me yet, because the whole buzz in the air really seemed to have nothing to do with me, I felt more like an observer than that I was the show itself. The whole patio venue was full to capacity, every table reserved, but we had the big bar room inside with a large speaker too, and I later learned that that filled up with people too, the manager said it was a hundred people. My photos don't really show how many folks were actually there.

I was walking around talking to the tables of excited people and was rattled at how enthusiastic they were. They really thought they were going to a concert. I asked them, how do you even know I am any good?

What they didn't know is that earlier in the week I had screwed up royally and had the carpet in my house cleaned, and I was still being affected by the chemicals, even though the company promised they were using the lightest nicest detergent they had just for me. So my throat was sort of wrecked, my eyes were still itching that morning from the

residue in the carpet, and I was so regretting that decision, kicking myself and feeling defeated. I had used the Rife machine to fix my throat, but I was not healed yet completely, chemicals really ruin my day.

But the people at the tables were only smiling and would just laugh and knew nothing of what I was going through.

They thought I was just going to sing their favorite Neil songs, but I was planning so much more, I was going to impersonate his voice and guitar playing. And that is a big difference. He has a very quirky distinct tone, it can be shrill, very edgy, it is an instrument, and I have practiced for a month for many hours at home and at the nursing home rehab I play at every week to get down all the little nuances and emotions he has in his voice. I discovered all sorts of odd bends, nasal rumbles and dips in his voice and had learned to mimic them. I searched the net and found no one that can do it to any degree. I really had a surprise for the people who came.

Normally I tend to be background music to folks enjoying the view and wine, as I have played there about 7 times over the past year. But I soon found out this time that people were there to listen.

So once it was showtime I sat down in front of the Neil backdrop I designed, and tuned up, everyone looked at me so ready and I just gulped back the nerves.

It was hard to focus at first, that is when I noticed my body started to react and shake, I never get nervous any more, I couldn't believe it, my hands were actually quivering, was it from the carpet poison? I looked at my fingers on the guitar frets and they were feeling a bit disconnected, I tried to pretend this was not happening but this intense situation had really stressed me, yea, now I was a little scared, I just wanted to perform good. There was the real possibility of blowing it and choking. I have a history of screwing up and letting people down on stage, not too often but it overtakes your

head when you worry about it happening again. My mind was pretty clear though, in fact very quiet and serene, I have been working on meditation every morning for over a year now and have wrestled control of my thinking back from any random destructive thoughts. This helps me a lot. So I told the folks I was going to do about 30 minutes of some 70s era songs, and I ran through a number of Cat Stevens, Eagles, and America songs, like Horse with No Name, Morning has broken, and Peaceful Easy Feeling. It took about 20 minutes into the set my nerves finally relaxed, and my voice was strong and controlled. Whew.

I got to the point to start the tribute, I was very warmed up and relaxed and ready to try this crazy feat. After I gave a little introduction and was about to start the Neil Young tribute the place got really quiet, and it hit me that this was it, time to do it.

But an odd thing happened then, I just sat there for a full minute just quiet. I wasn't trying to be dramatic, I don't know what I was thinking really, I was just trying to center myself like when you get ready to do an olympic triple somersault off the high dive. Then I started the chords and harmonica for 'Out on the Weekend', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCEIUitrLZc>

Oh by the way, I learned to play harmonica for the show too, I am not any good yet, but it added that important noise to the mix. And when I heard my voice come through the monitor at my feet I was amazed at how much that sounded like Neil Young, it was delicate and thoughtful, it was really eerie and suddenly I had huge confidence that this was going to work out great. And the big applause and hollers was more than I have ever gotten before. I looked at everybody and knew my song list was going to please them. And it went on and on song after song, they were so happy with me. And I was singing the most difficult vocals you can do, really high melodies in falsetto, pulling it off. Lots more applause and approval. Felt like I was flying, and I had an arsenal of great songs I rolled out, I did Sugar Mountain, Needle and the damage done, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0t0EW6z8a0> Old Man, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An2a1_Do_fc Only love can break your heart, Long May you Run. 18 songs total.

The crowd was so digging it all. And even though I chatted a bit between songs, when I sang I didn't even look at them, I was just locked in on the monitor and crafting this unusual singing style of Neil, it has a hollow bizarre tone that makes you sad and reflective. So I dropped in 'Love is a Rose' and Comes a time, just to keep the spirits up.

Then after an hour I took a break to run to the bathroom, and as I walked through the door into the bar room behind where I was performing, it was full of people, and it surprised me and the first thought I had was 'wtf who are all these people, what is going on here?' And the whole room were looking at me and suddenly applauded and cheered. Good god.

What? It was then I remembered that we had a speaker in this big room too, and these are the fifty more people that could not get into the show. And I was shaking hands, and the ladies were smiling and hugging me, it was wild. I have been playing for a few years now but I never had so much adoration and affection, and complements, seemed everyone wanted to talk to me, such approval, this must be what celebrities experience, it is a wonderful energy to have so many people happy with you, because the truth is I fake being confident, I have my own world of suffering, I mostly sort of mope around in my life and I am glad if anyone likes me, but hey, now this. This is not bad at all.

So the second set of Neil was strong too, with songs like Ohio, After the Gold rush, and Southern man. But I could feel my throat was strained and my voice was not going to hold up for much longer. I had really pushed hard on these songs, the high notes were getting harder to hit solidly, and I was missing the high ones, I was losing my super power, and as I finished with Neil's Heart of Gold, and told the folks that that is the finale of the tribute, they cheered and stood up and gave me a standing ovation, and I was stunned and sort sat there watching them in disbelief, and thought to grab my camera and shot a picture of it, attached it for you.

But then I just kept going another 30 minutes with some other songs, and when I did Folsom prison blues a whole table got up and start dancing, what a scene. I ended off and got some phone numbers of people who want me to play their house parties, and shook a lot of hands.

Once everyone left I sat with my buddy Hess the manager and talked about what just happened. We agreed it was phenomenal. Funny thing he said that there was so many people, and the hard work of serving them all, he saw his staff get exhausted and had that look in their eyes they had had enough. haha. He has booked me for once a month in the Sunday late afternoon time through the whole summer, how about that. So I said it looks like we have hit upon a really good idea with the tribute, let's keep it going! What next? We talked about a tribute to Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, or others. But now I have decided I want to do a Merle Haggard show, I love his music and am

certain that it would be quite popular once again. Merle died this year, and lived only south of me here a few miles at Mount Shasta.

So, to answer your question, it went pretty good.

I did record the show, but now I have to figure out how to edit it to small pieces I can show you, stay tuned for that.

dees

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