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Danny B Rocks and Woos the House

by Jade Hemeon

Last week I went to see singer Danny B perform with guitarist Brian Gauci at Tessie McDaid's Irish Pub in west Toronto. It was a live performance like no other, and a reminder of the intimacy and connection that we can achieve through music.

Danny B, lead singer and harmonica player, covers the gamut with a bold versatility that embraces R & B, blues, jazz, soul and rock and roll. He may have a smiling twinkle in his eye or he may shed the odd tear, but whatever the mood, Danny will always pack a whole lot of feeling into a song. He takes his audience on an emotional journey with him as he rolls out numbers from an unparalleled repertoire of hundreds of songs.

One minute he's channeling Louis Armstrong's sentimental Wonderful World, the next he's standing on a chair belting out Wild Thing by the Troggs. He can rise to the occasion with almost any request, covering artists ranging from Otis Redding and Ray Charles to Cat Stevens and Joe Cocker. Not to mention a handful of Danny B originals. Whether it's a sensual ballad or hip-shakin' rock, with Danny it's a thrilling musical ride.

“When you wear a fedora and play the harmonica, people label you as a blues guy, and I love playing the blues,” says Danny B. “But I happen to love all musical genres and have fun mixing it up.”

Like a preacher with his flock, Danny communes with his listeners -- sharing his love, humor, pain and joy – and they are rivetted. There's many a musical number where the pub conversation stops

for Danny B. He can go for so long without a breath during a spellbinding harmonica solo that his audience wants to gasp for air for him.

Danny's gruff and gravelly voice, that he claims "did not come from eating yogurt," creates a harmonious dance of opposites with Brian Gauci's seductive guitar playing. Somehow this duo is able to perform songs that would normally require the musical input of much larger band, thanks to Danny's forceful and magnetic energy and Brian's dexterity as he covers the bass notes as well as rhythm and lead.

Danny B is a rare gem, and he shows us how precious and original a live musical performance can be.

www.dannyb.ca

(For bookings, call 416-244-9465)

Jade Hemeon is a senior reporter with Transcontinental Media Ltd. in Toronto. In her many years as a journalist she has covered everything from the investment world to adventure travel, and has held positions at a variety of media outlets including the Toronto Star and National Post.