

Musicians 'come together' for night of Beatles classics



By Brock Weir

If you're a musician hoping to get the audience to join in, success can be hit or miss; that is, if you're singing anything other than a Beatles song.

Just ask Toronto musician David Celia.

He recalls one Christmas hanging around with fellow musicians John Sheard and his sister, Mia, and simply picking one song from the Fab Four and, before long, everyone was belting them out, one tune after another.

Several years on, this trio reunites this month at the Aurora Cultural Centre to pay tribute to the iconic quartet in John Sheard Presents: A Night of Beatles Classics. Part of The Great Reunion series founded at the Centre by Mr. Sheard, this truly is a reunion, explains Mr. Celia.

'I haven't seen John in years, but I think this is going to be a lot of fun,' he says. 'It's not going to be a bunch of anal people trying to nail these songs. It is going to be effortless and joyful' and it will be exciting to hear what we come up with. We all know these songs and even though we're not playing jazz, it is similar to a jazz gig where we all show up, we don't have a lot of time to arrange it except on the spot. I love being spontaneous, and the level of musicianship is so high with these guys it is going to be exciting.'

Not leaving a lot of time to prepare for the gig is not due to procrastination. Mr. Celia is set to return for the January 29 concert with just hours to spare, following a tour with the German singer, Marla, with whom he is collaborating on a new album.

It is a long way from when he first picked up the drumsticks at the age of 10, somewhat influenced by his older brother, Danny, who always brought home the latest albums, forging a bond over the tunes of the 60s and 70s. By the time he was 13, David says he knew he was serious about pursuing music and 'there was no away out.'

'When I was 17, I started playing in bars, made some money on the weekends, but always had another job at the time,' he recalls. 'Eventually, I weaned into doing it full time, especially the aspects I love the most: performing, producing and recording. I was working in warehouses practicing jazz in my head and I just realised I was not going to be working in warehouses or factories anymore. It seemed clear at that point that I could do it. I didn't have to be rich or famous, but I would be able to do it and get by, which is totally what has happened since.'

From there, he has toured the world, cut albums, and become a mainstay on the Canadian music scene, relishing the opportunities to work with people who have influenced him along the way, including Gordon Lightfoot.

Now, he has just released his latest album, Double Mind, which he had been honing on his European tour. This latest album is his first release on vinyl, which harkens back to his days listening to the Magical Mystery Tour around the turntable with his brother.

"I started listening to music on vinyls and had to learn songs on vinyls and then CDs came out," he says. "As a producer, I am always trying to capture that analogue sound and it takes so much work in a digital medium. I always end up somewhat happy in the end, but as soon as you put it out in vinyl it just sounds perfect. It causes you to inhale the concept more than just playing it on iTunes."

However perfect music might sound on vinyl, however, few things compare to being able to "inhale" live, and participate in a mutual exchange between audience and performer.

"I love the unexpected. I like not knowing what is going to happen. On my last tour, I had 40 shows and didn't once write a set. Sometimes it is a pain in the ass, sometimes it is amazing to improvise."

John Sheard Presents: A Night of Beatles Classics gets underway January 29 at 8 p.m. at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 on the day of the concert. For more information, visit www.auroraculturalcentre.ca.