

Revival's St. Patrick's Day Performance provides a Great Green Time at Castle John's



A Review by Jim Stewart

Revival's lead singer Joey Villeneuve welcomed hundreds of green-clad revelers at Castle John's on Yonge Street for his band's St. Patrick's Day performance.

Hospitality and great times were in order on that Sunday afternoon at the eight-year old eatery as the four-man band rolled out masterful covers much to the delight of the packed venue.

The immediately recognizable songs were part of the charm of Revival's late afternoon performance that appealed to a wide audience assembled at the north Newmarket pub. With screens beaming sports events surrounding the stage area, patrons were treated to the Final Round of the PGA Players Championship in the background and great music in the foreground—a celebration of Golf Greens and Green Beer in wonderful symmetry.

The quartet—comprised of the dynamic Villeneuve on lead vocals and guitar; JD Parent on drums; Owen Bulger on bass and vocals; and Bruno Tassone on lead guitar and vocals—opened and closed each set with high-velocity Irish and Newfoundlander tunes.

In between the book-ended St. Patrick's Day staples, set one featured Revival's classic bar tunes such as "Bad Moon Rising" by CCR, "Brown Eyed Girl" by Van Morrison, and "Stuck in the Middle with You" by Stealers Wheel with Tassone and Villeneuve hitting Gerry Rafferty's range of notes.

Tassone's delivery of Oasis's "Don't Look Back in Anger" was the highlight of the opening set and the revelers responded with a thunderous ovation. There wasn't a hint of anger at Castle John's, especially when Revival moved seamlessly from the Gallagher brothers to Blue Rodeo's "Til I'm Myself Again" with Villeneuve covering Jim Cuddy as patrons enjoyed both the band's playlist and the tasty gustatory offerings of the pub.

The radiant Yazra set up my writer's table stage left and delivered a refreshing green Molson Canadian

My second verdant-tinted pint arrived with a delicious Shepherd's Pie, grilled vegetables, and a wee pot of perfect gravy between sets. Hospitality was on full display at the pub with ten friendly, green-garbed servers looking after the patrons.

The food and drink complemented my St. Patrick's Day concert experience as did the band's stellar second set featuring a rousing version of Tom Petty's "American Girl." Patrons clanged their bells and noisemakers, especially in tribute to Tassone's fine guitar

work. Appreciative audience members sang along to Villeneuve's delivery of 'She Ain't Pretty' by the Northern Pikes and took in the perfect drum rolls of Parent on the Beatles' classic 'Come Together.'

'Ramblin' Man' by The Allman Brothers energized the big crowd at CJ's followed by The Clash's 'Should I Stay or Should I Go?' a rhetorical question posed to the audience. The answer to the question was easy. Hundreds stayed for the good times and company. Tassone's steady vocals and Villeneuve's harmonica solo in 'What I Like about You' rolled together to set off the Romantics' hit song.

An up-tempo delivery of Dire Straits' 'Walk of Life' filled the dance floor and bassist Owen Bulger's lead vocal of the 1963 Beatles' hit 'I Saw Her Standing There' further energized the dancers. Revival's versatility was on full display during the second set as its three vocalists took turns engaging the revelers. A transition to 1983 with the Violent Femmes' 'Blister in the Sun' then back to the 60's to the Monkees' standard 'I'm a Believer' a song with broad appeal in the bar due to Smash Mouth's remake that appeared on the Shrek soundtrack.

The Killers' hypnotic chorus 'I got soul ? but I'm not a soldier' from 'All These Things That I've Done' got the revelers chanting and what Revival concert would be complete without Villeneuve covering Gord Downie and The Tragically Hip's 'New Orleans is Sinking.' A high energy version of Duran Duran's 'Hungry Like the Wolf' and Bulger's growling vocal work on Billy Idol's 'Dancing with Myself' packed the dance floor as revelers soaked in the band's musical stylings and the green beer that filled tables.

Revival lived up to their name on Sunday as the concert felt like a Rite of Spring after a dreary Winter. The quartet is one of York Region's bar band treasures and offered another stellar performance on their home turf on St. Patrick's Day at Castle John's. Slainte.