

Great American Songbook stands test of time with Jamieson and Sheard

By Brock Weir

?Crickets.?

That's the sound Reid Jamieson says he heard during a recent European gig where he asked the crowd how many people were fans of Elvis Presley.

But, as it happens, the people in the crowd were Elvis fans and didn't even realise it. That is the power of timeless music and selections from the Great American Songbook.

Jamieson, an award-winning singer-songwriter, will bring classics from the Great American Songbook back to life, joining John Sheard at the Aurora Cultural Centre for an evening of standards.

?John Sheard, amazingly talented guy that he is, I have been so lucky to play with him on the Vinyl Café tours and I guess he had a good time playing shows with me that when he heard we were planning an Ontario tour, he said, ?Hey, I have an idea for this show.' As soon as I heard about it, I was like, ?Yes, please!'

While Mr. Jamieson describes his style as ?indie soul?, he has always been drawn to the classics. Standards have had a significant influence on his work, recently wrapping the album *The Presley Sessions*, and *Dear Leonard*, a Leonard Cohen tribute album, which also incorporates original work inspired by the iconic Canadian singer.

?The amazing thing about songs from the past is there are certain songs I have heard my whole life and one day you just hear them [differently] and think that is a really beautiful melody, or that is a really beautiful chord change, and you learn so much,? he explains. ?My song writing is more contemporary, but there are parts of it that permeate my songwriting just from learning from the masters.?

For Mr. Jamieson, there is a certain formula for music that stands the test of time: you have to express something deep inside you, you have to be honest about it and express feelings that are universal with listeners. And, if they can be accompanied by beautiful melodies and lyrics, so much the better.

?Decades later, people are still crying over them,? he says, with a chuckle. ?I want to make people [at the Aurora show] feel as happy as these songs make me. But, it is not just happiness; it is an excitement for life. These songs are hopeful and [perfect] for spring ? half of them mention a rainbow! There is a beautiful longing in them and that comes through in the melody and the words. That is what I want people to walk away with. They are amazing songs, I love to sing them, and I am going to sing them for you!'

John Sheard Presents: The Great Reunion ? The Great American Songbook hits the Aurora Cultural Centre this Friday, April 1. Doors open at 7 p.m. with an 8 p.m. start. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 on the day of the concert. For more information, call 905-713-1818.