

Reunion Jam

Summer, 2010, at the former DiCastro's of Sylvan Beach, NY.

Music must come from the soul. I suppose that's been said before, but it became quite apparent this past weekend as I sat and listened to a group of musicians I had played with years ago. Now in their 60's and almost 70's, they banged out some great music from a bygone era. Jay, the archangel who got them all together for this event, may have the most soul of all.

You could quibble over how practiced these never famous guys had remained over the past forty odd years since they began playing in garage bands and then went on to high school proms, college beer blasts and eventually small clubs along the length of the valley. Those who continued to hone their skills sounded terrific the other night. And whether they kept playing over the years in their basement rec rooms with the family watching TV upstairs or they continued to play weekend nights for pay, their efforts must have cost them something while they also slugged out careers as insurance agents and car salesmen, teachers and engineers. Those who kept at their music sounded better than some of the others who like me at around age twenty drove home after a gig one night and put away my keyboard, only occasionally picking up an instrument for another forty years. There sure wasn't much time making for music after our jobs and wives brought responsibilities and babies ... and then teenagers and bills and all the flotsam of life that we thought we loved so much.

But the soul never quits. And it shows in the sound we'll never see with our eyes. We're so used to seeing good looking young people paired with good music in our modern media that it's a

shock to see a guy who looks like Mr. Whipple playing some pretty fine guitar licks instead of squeezing the Charmin. Standing there waiting for the downbeat in his Hawaiian shirt and baggy shorts ... not the stylish baggy shorts of the young ... you'd expect he was about to lead a bunch of old ladies in a few stanzas of Kum Ba Yah. Instead he breaks into an intro with a 12 bar blues style and starts wailing into the microphone as if he's Little Richard. And he's good! Damned good!

Later on the fellow who's been sitting with his wife at the next table stands up, runs his hands back over his \$200 haircut and smoothes down his executive cut sweat shirt and tailored shorts. Then he heads for the stage. You'd think he was someone's business agent or a successful stockbroker. That may be, but he's also the lead singer in a group that has remained together ... most of the time ... for the past 40 years. Tonight they will reprise a list of songs that made the hearts of a thousand young women throb as the girls danced to the music and sang out the pounding refrains in one last shriek of post-pubescent abandon before settling down to choose husbands and make babies. Quite a few of those women are back here tonight almost fifty years later dancing down by the stage.

Unique about the music we grew up with is it being *our* music and it doesn't matter if we're playing it or dancing to it or just sitting there tapping our feet. The music is from somewhere in our soul. That's where it lives.

David Griffin

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