

THE TWO RIVER TIMES™

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Local Musicians And Fans Celebrate The Release Of Debut CDs

By Uncle Mike

ASBURY PARK - On Friday night, May 8, McLoone's Supper Club played host to a duel CD Release Party for local musicians Roger Gardella and Rob Dye. Staples on the local music scene both Gardella and Dye were celebrating the release of their debut CDs entitled Thanksgiving Day and Days To Here respectively. Along with special guest Melissa Chill, Gardella and Dye treated the packed house to over four hours of heartfelt and inspired original music.

Shaking off the rust of a self-imposed exile, special guest Melissa Chill (lead vocals), accompanied by Rob Dye (acoustic guitar) and Michael Ghegan (keys), kicked off the night's festivities with terrific covers of Bruce's "Fire" (with a nod to the Pointer Sisters and a hint of Melissa Etheridge) and Fleetwood Mac's "Rhiannon" (Melissa shines on vocals/big crowd fave). However, it was Melissa's solo work on newly penned originals like "Shine" (wonderful vocal and acoustic guitar work), "Lost And Found" (another impressive vocal), "Somebody Else's Mistake" (hot new tune), "Drive" (chockfull of emotion) and "Blue Sank The Sky" (the loss of 911 revisited) that truly set the stage for Gardella and Dye. And while her voice has been missed on the local scene, it is totally obvious that Melissa Chill's recent hiatus has been time well spent in terms of her songwriting skills and creative energy.

Next up was the Rob Dye Band featuring Dye on lead vocals, electric and acoustic guitars and a highly talented group of musicians that included Askold Buk (electric guitar/backing vocals), Matt O'Ree (electric slide guitar), Ron Haney (bass), Dave Halpern (drums), Michael Ghegan (keys/sax), Melissa Chill (backing vocals) and guests, George Ott (acoustic/ electric guitars), Layonne and Dolores Holmes (backing vocals).

Opening up with "Loose Ends" (way cool slide by Matt O'Ree), the RDB performed all 10 cuts from Rob's debut CD, Days To Here, as well as a well chosen Billy Joe Shaver cover. Some of Rob and the band's better moments came on tunes like "Precious One" (fine band jam/Matt steals the song with just a simple little guitar riff, well simple for him), "You Called Me Here" (one of their very best/big beat/Rob hot electric g/keys and d's baby, keys and d's) Billy Joe's "If I Give My Soul" (straight out of

Austin, T./great beat/band has it goin' on/crowd fave), "My Baby Left Me Yesterday" (great Big Easy feel and Rob's best effort) and "Cars, Trucks And Buses" (band finishes strong as George chips in with cool electric g. and Matt rocks on slide). Hey. No one works harder on the local scene than Rob Dye and this was a night well deserved.

And while Dye might have had the most supporters in the room, there was no doubt that this night belonged to Gardella. Aided and abetted by the likes of Matt O'Ree (electric and acoustic guitars), Jeff Sund (acoustic guitar/backing vocals), Linc Davis (bass), Bob Boyd (drums), Kristian Rex (keys/backing vocals), Marc Muller (pedal steel/dobro), Yuri Turchin (violin) and Thom White and BethAnne Clayton (harmony vocals), Roger (lead vocals/acoustic guitar/harmonica) was right on from start to finish in bringing to life the songs of his debut solo CD, Thanksgiving Day From their opening number "How Did You Know" (Roger all revved up/Matt killer slide), Roger and the band were just so tight it was a sheer joy to behold as they worked their way through each and every cut including "Thanksgiving Day" (Roger smooth as silk on lead vocals/stellar acoustic guitar play by Matt and Roger), "I Will Make It Through" (sweet song of redemption and hope/a real beauty/big crowd fave), "Woodpile" (co-written by Noelle Cartisser/monster song and performance), "The Sun Is Just Fine" (stellar band #/Thom brings the energy and overall good vibe/Yuri T. is the man), "Kathryn's Lullaby" (Roger and Thom's vocals make it), "So Close So Dear" (slightest hint of Neil Diamond in Roger's vocal/Bob Boyd solid as always), "Bird Song" (Yuri steps up on fiddle/most fitting tribute to "Bird" who is gone but never forgotten), "Tennessee" (Marc and Yuri terrific give and take on dobro and fiddle/another outstanding band effort), "Aglow" (Roger and Yuri perfect together/a true beauty) and "Lost In Sussex" (joined on stage by producer Jon Leidersdorff and engineer Rob Lebret Roger, Matt and the boys go out rockin').

Look, as much as I like Thanksgiving Day and I really do like Thanksgiving Day, Roger's songs were even better live. I mean the band had such a great feel for the material, both as a group and individually, that it is unfathomable to think that they had never played together live before this night. Talk about a group of professionals. Simply put, Roger Gardella and the band just nailed it. And to be perfectly honest, I couldn't tell if there were more smiles on stage or in the audience. But I can tell you this. For as long as I have known him, Gardella has always delivered. And this night wasn't any different. Roger was perfect. The band was perfect. And the night was perfect. End of story!