

A TIME FOR MUSIC

October 31, 2012

By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

Just a little housekeeping and catch-up as to what I have been up to lately. Last Friday my daughter May and her husband Seth Bernard played a concert in at the Wealthy Theater Annex in Grand Rapids, Michigan, only about an hour away from where we live, a chance for us to visit with the two of them and to hear their wonderful music.

Margaret and I set off in mid-afternoon and met them at the Gaia Café on Diamond Street in Grand Rapids, a vegan-friendly veggie restaurant, where we had a leisurely early dinner. I had a tempeh sandwich and some soup, and watched a May and Seth try to eat the huge Mean Green Burrito, the largest burrito I have ever seen, literally a mountain of food on a plate. They had to take the remains of the feast with them.

Then it was off to the theater to help set-up for the show. I have spent most of my life around music events of one kind or another and it feels like home to be backstage doing this and that or just hanging out. In this case, Margaret and I (mostly Margaret) were helping them take tickets (Will-Call, etc.), plus we handled the 'merch' end of things, like their various CDs.

May and Seth usually play festivals and good-sized venues, often with a full band. But this night they were just a duo, a small venue and a more intimate setting. This place held maybe 100 people. After the sound-check, when we got everything set up, people started flowing in. It was a great listening to the two of them without a whole band. I could hear every note of Seth's guitar and all of the subtle inflections of May's voice. We had a great time. They did two sets and we got home after Midnight, which is way past my bedtime.

Now fast forward to Tuesday (yesterday) and some more music events, this time a recording session here at our studio. May and Seth rolled in this afternoon for a three-day recording session, with producer Tyler Duncan and drummer Trevor Hobbs. Duncan is a two-time world champion in Irish music, playing the uilleann pipes, the low whistle, bodhran, and many other instruments. He will engineer the session and also play some.

I ended up cooking dinner for the crew, which turned out to be a large pan of paella, with all the good things inside. With the weather dropping into snow temperatures, the paella was just what the doctor ordered, and the group of us pretty much ate the whole thing. Wow!

Then it was back to the studio for the kids (I call these 30-year-olds, kids) for an evening, and it was to bed for me. Now I am up and writing this. Today and tomorrow they will be recording.

Studio dates like this are always fun. Because of studio etiquette, everyone is in an up mood and shared meals are mini-celebrations. I will try to get down there, hang out, and I might even

do some photography.

For those of you who have not heard these guys (or who just want a treat), here is a full PBS episode of the TV program "BackStage Pass" with an interview and live recording of May and Seth, plus a number of their songs, including the famous "Shine On." If you have the time and inclination you will see and get to know a remarkable couple and also hear some heart-soothing tunes.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1fbCNBK9c>