

Opposites Attract: *Saints, Sinners* Join Forces

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Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD – Jan 21, 2010 – Performing at the Coffee With Conscience Concert Series this weekend, artists Pat Wictor and Toby Walker tore it up with their fabulous finger-picking guitar playing and breezy rapport. Ahrre Mahros, owner of Ahrre’s Coffee Roastery on Elm Street in Westfield, started The Coffee With Conscience Concert Series 10 years ago. All proceeds from the shows go to charity.

Mr. Wictor, a calm, folksy singer/songwriter, and Mr. Walker, a charismatic, mischievous blues singer, met several years ago. They immediately became friends and went on the road together, naming the tour “The Saints and Sinners,” reflecting their quite opposite personalities and styles.

With beautiful, long red hair and a lovely classic folksinger-type voice, Mr. Wictor is captivating. Equally as engaging is his gentle demeanor and his ability to connect with the audience, both of which made for a great show.

He mentioned he and his wife are making a move – from one Brooklyn apartment to another – and he talked about the feelings that packing and pairing down often incite.

“I don’t write a lot of breakup songs, but I may write one about moving,” he said. After playing a blues track – with chorus that goes, “Oh blues, you’re the trickster in my house” – Mr. Wictor sang a song about a difficult and turbulent lover.

“Have you ever fallen in love with a real piece of work?” he asked the audience, and then described this kind of tumultuous love in vivid detail:

“She’s a flash flood on an August day
Steady as a leaf in a storm
I’ll die of a thickened skin
If her love don’t do me in.”

That love must have been in Mr. Wictor’s past, however, because he shed only positive light on his wife. In sweet and lighthearted fashion, he sang “How Come We Don’t Fight?”, a number about his super-peaceful relationship with his wife.

“Are you selling me the lie that I’m always right?
I don’t mean no harm,
and you know you’re my sweetie
I don’t need a big fight
A little tiff will scratch my itch.”

The folksinger closed his set with an old gospel number, and then he introduced Mr. Walker. “Toby



Photo by Tom Fortunato

and I were fated to meet.” He said. About five years ago, Mr. Wictor explained, on a way to play a show, he heard Mr. Walker on the radio. Lo and behold, they met at the show and have been friends and colleagues ever since.

Out came Mr. Walker, dressed in black, with a fun, cowboy-like energy. His opening comments to the crowd were, “Remember folks, the blues is not about feeling bad...it’s about me making you feel bad.”

Mr. Walker’s charming, sexy, troublemaking personality, coupled with his brilliant fingerpicking and blues-style guitar playing, were most appealing. His opening number was a classic blues song about a womanizer:

“He’s got a way with women
And he’s just got a way with mine.”

His voice, scratchy and bluesy, added to his whole renegade style. Rowdy, in fact, would be an appropriate way to describe Mr. Walker’s rugged magnetism.

“When I was about 14, I got bitten by the blues bug real bad,” he told the crowd. With that, he took out a unique silver guitar and performed the classic “Jitterbug Swing.” Mr. Walker’s rendition was awesome, upbeat and lively. In the crowd, everyone was grooving.

The show culminated with Mr. Wictor and Mr. Walker on stage together. Their styles, voices and personalities truly complemented one another. One of the last numbers was a sing-along; the audience sang the chorus to Mr. Walker’s “Give Me That Online Religion,” an enjoyable end to a radiant night.