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Live from Patchogue, it's Jay Scott

By Jennett Meriden Russel



Patchogue singer and songwriter Jay Scott, left, rehearses in the Patchogue studio of drummer Christie DeFeo for a performance as part of Patchogue Theatre's Live in the Lobby series on January 6. JENNETT MERIDEN RUSSELL

While attending an open mike performance in 2005 at the Brickhouse Brewery in Patchogue, Christopher Capobianco heard a sound that caught his attention. The director of communications for the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts wandered from the back of the Main Street pub up to the stage. What he had heard was the distinct voice of singer-songwriter Jay Scott.

"It's a very unique voice," Mr. Capobianco said. "He has a very bluesy, soulful style of music, and it just grabbed me. It's a voice that just demands to be heard."

Mr. Capobianco took an immediate interest in helping to promote Mr. Scott's career. And in that vein, Mr. Capobianco booked Mr. Scott and his band, Grand Case Scenario, to perform this Sunday, January 6, in the Patchogue Theatre's "Live in the Lobby" series, which showcases local music talent.

Mr. Scott, a 30-year-old Patchogue resident, will be recording the concert for a live CD he plans to release later this year.

The father of one gears his music around events in his life. Gripping lyrics run the gamut from waiting for true love to betrayal by a close friend. Catchy melodies hold a strong blues feel but are mildly seasoned with a down-home country warmth that helps convey the sincerity of each song.

But it is Mr. Scott's rich, gritty yet satiny voice that makes his music instantly compelling. Although born and raised on Long Island, his savory, raspy tone is pure Delta blues in origin, and is as intoxicating as southern whiskey.

"The way I sing is because of what I write," Mr. Scott said. "And what I write, I try to be honest, and write about things that touch me. Because if I don't believe what I'm saying, then you're not going to believe what I'm saying either. I go and watch a lot of bands, and if I don't believe it, then I'm really not digging it."

Mr. Scott has played with a variety of musicians over the years and the band's roster still tends to change. Playing on the catchphrase "best case scenario," the band named itself Grand Case Scenario to convey its shifting nature.

Currently on the band's rota are drummer and vocalist Christie DeFao, bassist Jason Black and guitarist-vocalist Aaron Palmadessa. Mr. DeFao also doubles as the band's producer, recording CDs from his Patchogue basement studio.

"I also dabble on the keyboard," Mr. DeFao said. "Seriously—dabble. I pretty much injure myself on the keyboard."

Mr. DeFao added he is also attracted to Mr. Scott's songwriting abilities. He noted that the tunes have a meaty quality that musicians can sink their teeth into.

"There's no straight path from the beginning to the end of the song," Mr. DeFao said, "because we sometimes have different guys play with us at different times. And we'll let the songs go where they go, because we're coming from a similar place and we love the material. We're able to expand upon it, and then come back. And it never gets stale by doing it that way, for the musicians or the audience, and we're hoping we catch some lightning in a bottle for the show."

Having learned to play guitar only seven years ago, Mr. Scott's chord progressions are simple but effective. Often by distorting major chords into a mix of minor and suspended variations, he adds poignant musical shifts to his beguiling melody lines and haunting lyrics.

Among Mr. Scott's songs that will be featured at the Patchogue Theatre on Sunday are six songs from his first CD, "Music for the Mind and Soul," which was released this year. The album kicks off with a funk/rock number titled "This Voice,"

which highlights Mr. DeFao's tight drum licks that rip with controlled mania.

Next is Mr. Scott's bluesy reminiscence of long road trips touring with a former band throughout California, titled "Lonely Road," which showcase the singer's rangy and powerfully affecting voice. The album concludes with an acoustic version of the song with only Mr. Scott and his guitar.

"The Good Fight" is inspired by the loss of his mother, Marilyn Scott, who died five years ago due to complications from diabetes when she was in her early 60s. He pointed out that their relationship had been strained at the time of her death, and the song reflects a heartfelt quality of Mr. Scott's efforts to come to grips with his regret, and mortality itself.

He then funks things back up with "Deliver," which stirs up an addictive rhythm and blues pulse coupled with jazz chord phrasing. "Deliver" truly delivers in all aspects.

The last song, titled "Sometimes," slows back down with an earthy reckoning of the inevitable loss of loved ones. The track—in part—refers to brothers who die in battle. The tune once again provides a platform for Mr. Scott to display his sincere vocal readings of his own music.

"It's not like my problems are anything new," Mr. Scott said. "But they're new to me, so I write about them. And maybe it's just me, but I feel like you have to believe what you're saying, and so, when I sing, it comes from that place—from the heart."

Tickets for Jay Scott's Live in the Lobby performance this Sunday, January 6, at 7 p.m. are \$10 each and are available at the door. The Patchogue Theatre is located at 71 East Main Street, Patchogue. For more information, call 207-1313 or visit www.patchogetheatre.com.

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