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**“Mickey Finn”
by
Tom Holbrook**

The section in which this column appears is the “Lifestyles” section which mostly presents things happening around and about that would be interesting or advantageous to those who read this paper. I’m happy I’m allowed to contribute interesting and/or advantageous tidbits to your lives on a weekly basis and hope they will increase the quality of your life to some degree. To that end I report the following.

Judy and I happened to attend our very first performance of “The Mickey Finn Show” at Savannah Center the other night and my quality of life was enhanced by leaps and bounds as a result. We’ve had the opportunity to attend one of Mr. Finn’s shows in the past but never opted to do it, but friends of ours were going out of town for a couple of weeks and happened to have tickets for the show and insisted that we go... especially since we had never been before.

After their buildup of Mickey and his group we went with high expectations, which can be very dangerous most times, because rarely does anything ever match up in the actual scheme of things. Well, I can tell you right now we were not disappointed one iota as the performance exceeded our expectations on all levels. Apparently, Mr. Finn must have a cult following here because when he asked from the stage how many had been to previous shows a good 90+% of the audience raised their hands. When he asked how many had not, Judy and I felt like traitors raising our hands with the remaining 7% or 8%, especially when the rest of the audience went... “OOOhhhhhhh!” We really didn’t know what they meant by “OOOhhhhhhh!” but we soon found out and it wasn’t a bad thing.

We expected the quality of the music to be good because we know the Villages entertainment staff does not book bad acts... but we didn’t get good music this time. We got fantastic music! Mickey... yes I can call him Mickey, I’m one of his regulars now... came out and did his usual “Heyy!” To which we replied as one... “Heyy!” He then sat down on his silver aluminum beer keg and began to wail... for the un-initiated, that’s a musical term usually reserved for saxophone or clarinet solos... anyhow Mickey began to wail on the piano in a honky-tonk manner totally unique to most pianists.

He didn’t pound the keys... well, maybe every now and then he did... but for the most part he stroked the keys and the piano responded with a fantastic sound that re-regenerated and stirred the souls of those listening. I was so mesmerized by his energy, playing technique and sound that when he completed a song I was sitting with my mouth dropped open forgetting to clap.

Sitting beside the piano, on a high stool was a beautiful lady, who was also his wife, with a five string banjo on her lap. Dressed in a stunning white satin gown this vision of loveliness began to pick and chord that instrument like she had birthed it and all the notes inside it were there only to respond to her touch and stroke on the strings. She wasn't just another pretty face folks...she was the real thing that added zest, talent AND beauty to the show.

Needless to say, the core musicians who surrounded the two of them were of the highest professional quality and played their instruments as though they were a part of them. The names of the group aren't the important thing for this column but if their names were Krupa on drums, James on trumpet, Dorsey on trombone, Hinton on bass, Goodman on clarinet, and Hampton on keyboard the music could not have sounded better or more professional. Another feature was the mid-concert introduction of Michael Andrews who sang a 25 minute set with a Bobby Darin, Frank Sinatra flair that brought the crowd to their feet at his conclusion.

Folks, it wasn't the music that made this show so special. It was the personality, energy and downright likable spirit of Mickey Finn himself. Some of the sounds made and his constant audience interaction was reminiscent of "Spike Jones and The City Slickers" band of the 40's and 50's but without the slapstick. Mickey would say "Heyy!," we would say "Heyy!" He would say "La-De-Da," we would say "La-De-Dad." He would say "Hip, Hip..." and we would say "Hooray!" Always moving but always maintaining contact with us, his audience, and always producing great sounds.

He'll be back for a Christmas show and you should be sitting there and enjoying it... but only if you want a great evening of fun, frolic and fantastic music.

Have a great week.

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