



VELVET ROPE MAGAZINE

"MICHAEL GABRIEL' STRINGS ATTACHED" A Concert Review by Marille Julian – November 25, 2011

This really was a perfect setting for the realization of Michael Gabriel's concert series. Forest Hill United Church has a high peaked wooden roof, beautiful stain glass windows surrounding the sanctuary and a natural stonewall at the front. They had behind the stage curtained off with black and a stripe of red down the center, creating a very serene setting for what turned out to be a wonderful concert.

Having fallen in love with Michael's voice when I first heard him on the Indie Rock Invasion Show, I knew I was in for a real treat. There is something about the way that Michael is able to express a message through his music, and I would be quite happy to hear him tell me I have a terminal disease.

With adding the strings; Trina Nadeau on Cello, Karen Spithoff on Violin, Susan Zach with Viola, Sandy Sebastian on Piano, joined on Guitar by Robert Reid and Backing Vocals Lindsey Minaker, it was a breathtaking coming together of sound. Everyone complemented the sound so well; never did I find myself sitting in the audience, thinking that something didn't fit or that anyone part was sticking out oddly. This was really a great feat since Michael had only a few rehearsals with the extra musicians to pull this magnificent evening together.

One of the few songs that really stuck with me was his rendition of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*. A cover song that has a rap for being over done, Michael was able to bring new life to the piece, especially when he asked for audience participation. It was wonderful to be sitting in the Sanctuary of Forest Hill, hearing the harmonies all around me come together.

Angel Wings was another song that I followed me home. Michael professed that this was one of his favourites, one that he's been singing since his days at Open Mic's and Rock Bands. While listening to the lyrics of this song, talking of someone crossing over to the other side, really made my wish a few members of my Youth Group had been there. My Fiancee loved it so much he asked if it could be our first dance. 'Strings Attached' has been one of the most comfortable concerts I have been to in a long time. I was really able to just sit back and enjoy the entire evening. The positive messages in all of Michael's music, was like sitting through a totally uplifting Sermon, one in which I wasn't watching the clock. At times I would close my eyes and it was like we were sitting around a campfire listening to some awesome friends sharing their music. Michael performed two 45-minute sets with a 15-minute intermission, and followed by a wonderful reception catered by Black Sea Catering.

Near the beginning of the evening Michael Gabriel paraphrased a quote from Million Dollar Baby, "the toughest thing about a dream is that you're the only one who can see it". 'Strings Attached' was one more step along the path of Michael finally reaching his dreams, and seeing them come to life. I foresee Michael Gabriel's next endeavour will take him to the big stage with a full orchestra, and I can't wait for it to happen.