

Buddy Guy and Quinn Sullivan Paint the Zeiterion Blue



by Nate
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I walked into the Zeiterion Theatre Wednesday night expecting to see a performance by a legendary blues musician. I walked out a few hours later knowing that I saw two.

Buddy Guy, famed Chicago bluesman, did not disappoint. His mastery over the pentatonic scale was riveting, as was the showmanship he's long been noted for. I enjoyed every bent note, every crying vibrato, every story he told, whether spoken or played.

What I didn't expect was the jaw-dropping performance by Buddy's opening act, Quinn Sullivan. Many of you may already be familiar with the South Coast native, who is well on his way to becoming a household name himself. Sullivan, at the ripe age of 12, has the chops to not only open for Buddy Guy, but to stand toe to toe with him as well.



Had I known what I was missing, I would have gotten to the "Z" promptly at 8:00 to see the entire opening set, rather than grabbing a beverage at the Pour Farm. I caught the tail end of Quinn's opener, but when I walked into the lobby to the

sounds of his crying Stratocaster, I had a moment of panic. My ears let me assume Buddy had already taken the stage. But

while Mr. Guy was still on the tour bus, his diminutive sidekick was stealing the night.

After closing to the stretched out B.B. King classic "The Thrill is Gone," Sullivan left the stage to a roaring standing ovation. I've been to half a dozen or so musical performances at the "Z" in the last year, and they all seem like Church services in comparison. I'm sure Quinn had his share of family and friends to support him, but everyone in that theatre became a fan of his after hearing him play. I've seen talented musicians his age or younger before, but I can't figure out how Sullivan got the blues.

When Buddy Guy came out, I had one of those great feelings that only seeing a legend can produce. He played Guy classics such as "First Time I Met the Blues," mixed in a couple of cover songs, as well as a few songs off his new album, "Living Proof". He interacted with the crowd, even walking around the entire theatre, lobby included, during one part of the show. Guy is a true showman from another era in every way. Born in the Mississippi Delta in the 1930's, the world he grew up in lends reason to why he feels the hurt in every blue note he plays.



Enter Quinn Sullivan, from stage right, after a generous and heartfelt introduction from Guy. Quinn walked out like he owned the place, which at that point he did, and instantly began trading licks with Buddy. Guy had a look of a proud grandfather on his face, his prodigy being showcased in front of the home crowd.

This is where I get confused, because I don't understand how someone of Sullivan's age, growing up in the YouTube generation, can have the necessary fractures in his heart to

properly play the blues. Most music can be fabricated, auto-tuned, and pumped out of the speakers, even when the performer is having an off night. (See any billboard top 100 from this millennium.)

The blues are not that way. They can't be faked, and it doesn't matter if you're Berkley educated or learned on a two-stringed Dudley bow as Guy did. Sullivan must be carrying baggage from another lifetime in another world within his soul, because there is no other logical explanation.

It was another unforgettable night at the Zeiterion, where current and future blues legends shared the stage and bared their souls with those lucky enough to attend.