

Soulful: Mishka Kicks Off O’Neill Tour With Sold-Out Show

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Mishka performed last Thursday night in Tofino. (Erin McMullan Photo)

By Erin McMullan Review TOFINO — With eyes closed in musical prayer and eloquent vocal calisthenics channeling Bob Marley and a wide range of musical influence, Mishka, modern mystic, incites his audience to jump, dance and sway.

Far from sounding eclectic, Mishka has a solid signature that steers a clear course with roots reggae and successfully integrates elements from techno through whiskey-soaked rock balladeer.

I swear I even heard the refrain from the Jackson

Five’s “ABC.”

The last time he was in Tofino 18 years ago, Mishka told the sold-out crowd Thursday night, he arrived here after hitchhiking in the rain.

Asked earlier in interview what he remembered, “Just a lot of mist,” he laughed. “Obviously it’s built up a lot more and it looks more touristic than it did before, but still an astoundingly beautiful place.”

Following an onstage reference to Rastafari with a cover of, “Roll up a spliff,” the crowd surged onto the dance floor like the tide.

“Above the Bones,” plaintive lyrics and longing to “take me home” yearned for a higher plane of existence – think “Redemption Song” meets Blue Rodeo.

From Talk About, Bittersweet seemed to express a darker angst and experience, offset on the CD version by a

Motown-style echo refrain provided by a female chorus.

Mishka's "Keep on Loving" summed up the message he stands for, approaching life with passion and conviction.

The evening ended on an instrumental crescendo.

After the sold-out show, Mishka said, "The crowd was, and still is lively and full of Tofino vibe, they were bubblin'.

As the room emptied out, I was reminded of waiting earlier, cross-legged on the carpeted stair, listening as Mishka spoke with the O'Neill documentary crew. Quieter then but with the same command of his audience, power without force, instilling belief without preaching, speaking his truth.



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