



Roaring Loudly with Spalding McIntosh: a Musical Artist in the Heart of Brevard

By John Harris

“To pick what you want to do in your life is a steep hill for any of us, we’re constantly evolving,” explained Spalding McIntosh, a singer/songwriter, musician, lead of the band “McIntosh and the Lionhearts” and a Brevard native. He continued, “As much as I and the circumstances in my life have changed, this has been the one consistent.... This is what I have to do.”

For some it may take their entire lives to discover their passion, for McIntosh he knew at a young age. He recalled, “It started when I was three or four, I saw the Lion King and knew I wanted to be a lion. I thought at the time if I did lion things eventually I would grow a mane.” McIntosh’s sister had to explain to him that life didn’t work that way and he had to come up with a new dream. He remembers an evening with his father, when he was seven, watching “Behind the Music” with Lynyrd Skynyrd. McIntosh shares the impact of that night, “I saw Ronnie Van Zant step up there on the stage and I thought, ‘that’s it.’” Discovering his own voice was now the next step towards climbing that hill.

“When I started, cover music was all I did, because I was so terrified to get my music out there... Now I write songs that are true to me.” He elaborated, “The lyrics have to come from the heart. They don’t have to be autobiographical, although sometimes they are, they just have to be sincere... I have a song called ‘Railroad Song’ and it’s about the guys that laid railroad ties 100 years ago, and I’ve never laid a railroad tie in my life.” McIntosh has learned the perfect formula, if you blend heart with knowledge you will paint a beautiful picture.

His brainstorming for each song can happen anywhere. He explains the process, “I always try to keep my eyes open because inspiration can happen at any moment... It’s like a bolt of lightning when it hits.” McIntosh continued, “I don’t always know where the inspiration comes from, but when it happens it’s time to do the work.” In his evolution as a performer, he has come to the realization that he is a songwriter first and a musician second. He reflects, “There will always be a better player. The gift I was given is my songwriting.”

For aspiring performers, McIntosh encourages them to surround themselves with better players. He advises “stay humble” and learn from others because “every musician in this world, no matter their level, knows something you don’t... so learn from them.” You will find McIntosh

performing live with his bandmates Mike Green, on bass, and Conrad McCure, on drums. To find where “McIntosh and the Lionhearts” will be performing next visit his website <https://spaldingmcintoshmusic.com/>. Look out for McIntosh’s collaboration with John Driskell Hopkins, of the Zac Brown Band, when they record a few songs together on May 18th. Visit Heart of Brevard’s Facebook page to see him and fellow musician Mike Ashworth, of the Steep Canyon Rangers, perform McIntosh’s original song, “This Transylvania County Christmas” for the HOB Holiday Variety Show. He definitely practices what he preaches when it comes to surrounding yourself with the best.

In addition to creating music, McIntosh is committed to giving back to the community who has supported him. He delivers food on Tuesday with the Meals on Wheels organization. He shares that service in hopes others will be inspired to do the same commenting drivers are always needed. Speaking of encouraging others ... he suggests that you fist bump an artist, because it has been a challenging year. Although McIntosh never adopted the physical attributes of a lion, as he had hoped as a child, he did gain the courage as an adult to follow his dreams and give back along the way. He has earned his nickname Spalding “Lionheart” McIntosh.



About the Author: John Harris is a recent graduate of the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media at Chapel Hill. John served as a Heart of Brevard Intern in 2020. He has experience in journalism and freelances as both a videographer and video editor. He can be reached through this email: johndavidsharris@gmail.com