

Mighty Uke Day 2 Another Step into Ukulele Wonderland!



It's really hard to put into words all my feelings about all the wonder of yesterday, but I'll give it a try (my little brain is still a bit fried):

Thank you so much to everyone who helped support Mighty Uke Day 2 in Old Town (forgive me if I miss anyone). First, the core volunteers who

helped make it all possible: Sara Wagner, Chuck Deyo (great job on keeping the open mic running smoothly), Jon Benallack, and especially Rhea Van Atta. We also had big help from Greg Gattuso, John Payne, and Susan Picking who helped with our set up on Friday and the many others who pitched in during the day at the last minute. A huge thanks to Dave Matchette who saved the day by loaning us his PA and running sound for the evening concert. Terry Hill was very generous (and trusting) to lend us 10 ukes for the Hilo Greg children's workshop. Our sponsors: Elderly Instruments (thank you Stan Werbin), Message Makers, Gallery 1212, Mya-Moe, Ohana, Kiwaya, Lanikai, and Paulele helped us make it affordable to put the whole thing on. Connie and the staff at the Sir Pizza Grand Cafe were welcoming and hospitable as always and are a true community treasure.

The local press was very enthused and supportive of our efforts. A big shout-out to Jane Aldrich from WLNS TV6, Rich Tupica from the City Pulse, Anne Erickson from the Lansing State Journal, and Karen Love, Jack Robbins, and Dave Downing from WLNZ 89.7 FM.

The music was outstanding! From all the great original and cover tunes we heard at the open mic, the community of Michigan uke groups, the

talent of our featured performers Rachael Davis, Julianna Tuell and Andy Wison, Hilo Greg, and John Payne, and of course the skill and showmanship of our main stage performers Pat Malloy, Steve Szilagyi, Gerald Ross, Lynn and Brian Hefferan, and the one and only Lil' Rev - I think we had one of the most diverse, gifted, and entertaining lineups you could ever hope for at a festival.

I also want to give a special thank you to Tony Coleman and Margaret Meagher, director and producer of the "Mighty Uke". They were the impetus to get us started on this adventure by holding the inaugural festival last year. They've told me that they've been to bigger festivals but not better ones. They are truly wonderful people and Rhea and I are honored and blessed to call them our friends.

And of course, I want to thank all of you who came from near and far to be a part of Mighty Uke Day 2; after all, a party is pretty boring if no one comes to it! We had people from New York, Indiana, Ohio, Chicago, Wisconsin, Canada, and all around the state visit our festival and Old Town and I saw many beautiful, smiling faces. Attendance at the concert, open mic, movie showings, and workshops were above and beyond expectations.

I value your feedback on our festival; I hope to be able to improve it each year. I will put together an online survey that I hope you take a few minutes to fill out; your input is very important to our continued success. My mind is already thinking of new and cool ideas for next year, so keep checking in on our Mighty Uke Day Facebook page and here on our website for information as things start to come together. In the meantime, go to the Facebook page and enjoy all the wonderful video clips, photos, and memories people are sharing from the special day we spent together on May 5.

Love "uke" all,

Ben