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THE SPIRIT OF SPIRIT OF THE WEST: JOHN MANN IN AN INTIMATE SOLO CONCERT

John Mann is best known as the lead singer of iconic Canadian rock band *Spirit of the West*, but it comes as no surprise that he's also a powerhouse in his own right.

When this masterful musician comes to the **Chilliwack Cultural Centre** on April 17, he will create an intimate and powerful atmosphere filled with passion, dedication, and pure talent. It's a tale of hardship, hard-won happiness, and acceptance - and it's certainly a show you won't want to miss.

Mann has released three albums as a solo artist, creating a collection of softer and more intimate songs than found in *Spirit of the West's* repertoire - but still full of the vim and vigor found in legendary rock anthem "Home for a Rest" that first brought the band to fame.

These solo albums - the latest released just last year - highlight Mann's soulfulness and introspectiveness as a solo artist while documenting his journey to a more positive existence.

After coming to grips with giant obstacles in his personal life - a battle with cancer and adjusting to life with early onset Alzheimer's - this renowned singer and songwriter remains dedicated and passionate about his music.

His most recent album, titled *The Waiting Room*, was born out of his hospital experiences - and his choice to make it a positive journey.

"It's been a neat kind of journey, and talking to other people in their journeys as well," he told North Shore News during his battle with cancer. "I just started writing, and writing down what we had all been talking about and what we were going through."

The toughest time, Mann says, was after he beat the cancer but before he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Performing as an actor, he had difficulty remembering his lines and cues. As a musician, he began having trouble with lyrics and chords the band had been playing for decades. Doctors reassured him that his memory problems were most likely a lingering symptom of his cancer treatment, but Mann had a gut feeling that there was a deeper issue. The people around him became frustrated, and then concerned; his memory was only getting worse with time, and all signs pointed to the fact that something was wrong. The ultimate Alzheimer's diagnosis was both comforting - and terrifying.

But at the end of the day, Mann's family, friends, and bandmates came together around him - and emerged stronger for the experience.

"My *Spirit of the West* band mates circled me with care, and we will forge ahead as we've been doing the last 30 some-odd years with humour and friendship, playing our hearts out," Mann wrote in a heartfelt blog post announcing his diagnosis. "I will continue to write and tour, because this is what I do and what I love."

So while the legendary musician no longer plays guitar in his concerts, and uses an iPad to help him remember the lyrics, he's still up there on stage - pouring his heart out and proving passion is more powerful than disease.

The result is a collection of heartwarming, breath-taking songs - and a tale of a difficult, yet positive, journey.

"I'm the kid they cut apart, stitched back up, then grew a softer heart," he croons in "Thank You," one of the songs on *The Waiting Room*.

And after stressing for so long over medical issues, Mann says he's learned to let things go - and to treasure the good things in life. He's become more patient, more thankful, and brought a new soulfulness to his music.

Alzheimer's changed his life, Mann says, but it will never change his love of music, or the passion with which he performs.

"Hearing the news has been a difficult blow," he explains in his blog. "But I don't want to spend any more energy trying to hide my symptoms. I don't want to feel embarrassed. I want to accept what has happened and live."

It's with this joie de vivre and unwavering strength that John Mann will perform at the Chilliwack Cultural Centre on April 17, in what is sure to be an emotional and heartwarming journey to the heart of a Canadian Rock legend. For tickets and more information, contact the Box Office at 604-391-SHOW(7469) or visit them online at www.ChilliwackCulturalCentre.ca. All seats are \$32.

An Intimate Evening with John Mann is generously sponsored by The Chilliwack Progress, The Alzheimer Society of British Columbia, the Department of Canadian Heritage, Mertin Auto Group, the Coast Chilliwack Hotel, and the City of Chilliwack.

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Additional Information

<http://johnmann.ca/>

For additional information and to arrange interviews, contact:

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Chilliwack Cultural Centre

Owned by the City of Chilliwack, the Cultural Centre houses two unique performance venues, an art gallery, music instruction studios, arts and crafts studios, meeting rooms, offices, and

is home to the Chilliwack Academy of Music and the Chilliwack Art Gallery. Since opening in 2010, more than 220,000 tickets have been sold through the Centre Box Office, with a value exceeding three million dollars. The Centre is overseen by The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society on behalf of the City, and boasts The Chilliwack Academy of Music, The Chilliwack Visual Artists Association, The Chilliwack Players Guild, The Chilliwack Symphony Orchestra, and the Chilliwack School of Performing Arts as partners.

Chilliwack Cultural Centre highlights:

- 597 seat performance theatre
- 168 seat recital hall / rehearsal space / dance studio / meeting space
- Chilliwack Art gallery (22-foot high display area)
- 21 music instructional rooms
- Arts and crafts studios
- Storage and Archival Resource Room

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Chilliwack Symphony Orchestra and Chorus

Chilliwack Visual Artists Association

The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society is registered under the British Columbia

Society Act as a not-for-profit society (society number S-54973), and is a registered Canadian charitable organization under the Canadian Charities Directorate. (charity number 805742897 RR0001)

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