

Breaking News: Little League set for season-opening ceremonies

Updated: 8:26 am

Spechlis wonder

Nashville-based duo will play at Just A Cupcake

By Jeff Bryan

Thursday, October 12, 2017 at 8:21 am

Jeff Bryan



Photo courtesy of Spechlis

Spechlis, chosen the 2015 Rising Band, will perform at Just A Cupcake, where the duo says they'll bring their Americana sound to event attendees from 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. Having formed five years ago by happenstance, Sheyenne Rivers and Daniel Ericks have been paying their dues by playing anywhere and everywhere they can, including the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2015 when they received their award.

Riverland News

One of Nashville's rising country duos will streak into Dunnellon, as Spechlis prepares to light up the night during Jazz Up Dunnellon.

Spechlis, chosen the 2015 Rising Band, will perform at Just A Cupcake, where the duo says they'll bring their Americana sound to event attendees from 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. Having formed five years ago by happenstance, Sheyenne Rivers and Daniel Ericks have been paying their dues by playing anywhere and everywhere they can, including the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2015 when they received their award.

Spechlis (pronounced speechless) didn't get its start in Nashville — home of country music — instead in South Florida where Rivers and Ericks were performing separately at Bimini Boatyard's 25th anniversary celebration in Fort Lauderdale.

Rivers was playing with another guitar player, scheduled for an outdoor set, when the skies "just opened up and it started pouring rain." Inside, Ericks was playing a solo set, dealing with a technical issue.

"I told him it was the cable," Rivers recalled.

Ericks' response: "It can't be the cable."

Rivers loaned him a new cable, because sure enough, that was the problem.

"She was right from the start," Ericks said.

"I'm always right," Rivers, 32, quipped.

But Ericks made an impression.

"He has a great voice, he plays great," said Rivers, who noted her guitarist that night five years ago, wasn't "so nice." So she and Ericks exchanged numbers and soon began performing together. Both had been using the same booking agent during their time in South Florida, Rivers explained,

so when she called to see about arranging performances, the agent's response: "Oh my gosh, I'm speechless. Two of the great singers, you have the potential to take it all the way."

Rivers response: "I think you just named the band."

So she texted Ericks, who agreed it was the perfect choice.

"I love it," the now 34-year-old said.

Remaining in South Florida wasn't in the cards.

"I told (Daniel) from the get-go, I was looking to get out of South Florida and if you're not willing to make that move, that was in the cards for me," Rivers explained, noting she had often traveled to Nashville with her parents as a youth.

So she drug Ericks "kicking and screaming," to Nashville.

"That's cool," Ericks said of his reaction. "I don't have any ties to South Florida."

His had one sticking point in relocating

"Can my cat come with me?" he asked.

So Rivers, Ericks and his cat made the move, where they own and operate a coffee house just outside of Nashville. While they've played large venues such as the Country Music Hall of Fame, it's the intimate venues they both "love," because it provides a connection with fans.

"We've played everywhere from festivals and little dinners and dives, the little dives are my most favorite, because you can connect and get to talk to people," Rivers said, with Ericks noting they call their fans "family, because they are both fans and family."

If you're expecting country twang, the duo said that's not their style. They play more Americana, with a rock edge. But their influences span far and wide across musical genres with influences from the late-Tom Petty and Chris Cornell to Allison Kraus and Sarah McLachlan to Marvin Gay and Jim Croce.

"Oh man, Tom Petty, that one hurt and I know it hurt a lot of people," they exclaimed about the recent death of perhaps Americana's biggest influence.

While most of the work they perform is their own, they said you'll hear the occasional cover song, but don't expect it to sound like the original.

"For sure, we have so many influences, we do our own take on it," they said. "We both love great music, from pop to rock to doo whop."

Personal experiences, they said, are keys to writing songs. Rivers pointed out Ericks hears the tales and woes of her "heartbreaks."

"We do the writing together; there's some stuff he's written that I perform, sometimes he can tell the story better than I can," she said. "He's had to listen to all of my heartbreaks along the way, all the good and bad."

Rivers points to the song, "What Boys Do," as a great song Ericks wrote.

"I'm jealous, he wrote it better than I could and I lived it," she said.

"I feel like I lived it," Ericks retored.

Spechlis wants its music to speak for itself.

"When we start, we don't say anything," the duo explained. "We just start with a song, it always feels comfortable. After the show starts, we do tell stories of where songs came from, why they were written, but we want to let the music speak for itself."

Rivers and Ericks describe their show as a musical comedy.

"We're completely goofy, we just kind of let wherever we are take over," they said. "The vibe, we feel vibe."

And their witty, sarcastic banter follows.

"Oh yeah, it's our second language," Ericks said.

Added Rivers: "It's our first language."

No matter, they do hope by the end of their set, fans are left "speechless" and wanting more.

"We're excited, we're looking forward to the performance and adding to our 'family' base," they said.