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Nashville duo looks to leave Jazz Up Dunnellon 'Spechlis'

Award-winning group plays Saturday at Just A Cupcake

Jeff Bryan Riverland News Oct 16, 2017

One of Nashville's rising duos will streak into Dunnellon on Saturday.

Spechlis, winners of Rising Band Nashville 2015, will bring their Americana to Just A Cupcake as part of the day's Jazz Up Dunnellon festivities. 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, where they received their 2015 award.

Spechlis (pronounced speechless) didn't get its start in Nashville, but 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 guitarist, 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, and 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 at the time 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 messaged Ericks, who agreed it a perfect arrangement.

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



Spechlis, the duo of Sheyenne Rivers and Daniel Ericks, plays Saturday at the Jazz Up Dunnellon festival.

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But 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 child.

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 love, because the smaller stages provide 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.

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

While most of the work they perform is their own, they said concertgoers will hear the occasional cover — but don't expect them to sound like the originals.

"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 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 example of Ericks' chops.

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

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

Contact Riverland News Editor Jeff Bryan at editor@riverlandnews.com.

IF YOU GO

- Jazz Up Dunnellon runs from 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday in downtown Dunnellon. Parking and admission are free.



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