

## *Corey's Top 10 2015 Concerts*

As 2015 ends and we look forward to 2016, I share my top ten concerts for the past year. Though I started this commentary in 2015, it remained undone a few hours before a night of festivities with some good friends. Thus it awaits the new year to find its voice.

This past year, my wife was a partner at all but a handful of concerts I attended this year. That's oft times unusual and it surprised me when I started this commentary. But certainly Shelly's presence always makes for a nice show. Perhaps it tipped the balance.

1) My concert year concluded with a fun [show](#) by "The At Odds Couple" (that's how they billed themselves), (Chris) Difford & (Glenn) Tilbrook, the songwriting team behind their great UK band, Squeeze. Obviously billed as "Squeeze Acoustic," by promoters who wanted to make sure of a packed house, the show featured some deep cuts, including "Messed Around" (from "East Side Story") and "The Elephant Ride" (from "Sweets From A Stranger"). The stage set initially included two beds at either side; from under the cover of each emerged Chris stage left and Glenn stage right in sleep garb, including robes. As a duo and in a few cases just one or the other, they favored us with some interesting instrumentations, including Glenn on keys (solo) singing "Black Coffee In Bed" – with the usual audience participation on the chorus, and "Tempted." He even explained how "East Side Story" producer Elvis Costello convinced them to have Paul Carrack sing that classic on the original. They opened with "Take Me I'm Yours," Glenn then disappearing to get dressed while Chris sang and strummed "Cool For Cats." Chris then left for Glenn's "Coffee..." Other faves including "Some Fantastic Place," "Is That Love," "If I Didn't Love You" and "Goodbye Girl." And yes David Letterman, they played "Pulling Mussels (From A Shell)." They even included two Q&A sessions featuring the "man with the golden cape." The venue, The Play Station Theatre in Times Square, December 18.

2) John Fogerty kicked off the summer (June 24) but at [Radio City](#) with a wonderful show heavy on Creedence (Clearwater Revival) classics. A highlight for me was the strong kickoff, "[Born On The Bayou](#)," "Travelin' Band" and my fave all-time CCR tune, "[Up Around The Bend](#)" which sits in the pantheon of my all-time three faves (the others, "[A Good Feelin' To Know](#)" and "[All Right Now](#)"). I cannot recall a more powerful start to any show (maybe Poco's original lineup in 1990 in the same venue starting off with Richie Furay's semi-biographical song about the band, "[When It All Began](#)" and "Good Feelin"); all have great opening guitar riffs. Other classics found on YouTube include "[Keep On Chooglin'](#)" and "[Centerfield](#)." The newer song, "Mystic Highway," really works for me and I often find myself singing. The powerful show concluded with "[Fortunate Son](#)" followed by encores of "[Bad Moon Rising](#)" and "[Proud Mary](#)."

3) Traffic remains one of my all time fave bands and 2015 offered two distinct opportunities to cherish its music. Shelly and I ventured up The Capitol Theatre in Westchester with our often concert partners, Abbe and Ira, to enjoy Steve Winwood. Steve opened and closed with his two Spencer Davis Group classics, "I'm A Man" and "[Gimme Some Lovin'](#)." Steve and band really raved on my fave Traffic song from "John Barleycorn Must Die," the instrumental, "[Glad](#)." He offered homage to the late Jim Capaldi, Traffic's late drummer and great lyricist, who sang the lead on the original version of "[Light Up Or Leave Me Alone](#)." Always great to hear him perform his "Blind Faith" classic "[Can't Find My Way Home](#)" and Traffic's "Pearly Queen" which I first heard live on "Eric Clapton's Rainbow Concert" LP. The band displayed its versatility on the two longer cuts, "Rainmaker" and "[Low Spark of High Heeled Boys](#)." He concluded the regular set with his solo hit, "Higher Love" followed by the first encore, a riveting "[Dear Mr. Fantasy](#)." Date: April 25.

4) How can you not enjoy one of the best voices in rock who helped blend the tandem singing that so much exemplified Buffalo Springfield. Indeed, the Richie Furay Band opened their high energy set with a wonderful [cover](#) of Neil Young's Springfield classic ("On The Way Home") that Richie first sang on the seminal band's "Last Time Around" LP). When Springfield briefly reunited, they opened their sets with Richie singing that tune; it always brings a smile to my face. Richie included some new songs from his really great CD, "[Hand In Hand](#)," issued last March, including the anthemic "[We Were The Dreamers](#)" (I suspect many fans will rank it up there with "[Good Feelin'](#)"). This set included a fair sampling of Springfield tunes, including a [medley of the other Neil songs](#) Richie sang lead on ("Flyin' On The Ground Is Wrong," "Do I Have To Come Right Out And Say It," and my fave "Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing"), Stephen Stills' "[For What It's Worth](#)" and Richie's "[A Child's Claim To Fame](#)" and "[Kind Woman](#)," which he later covered on the live Poco "DeLiverin" LP. I even got to take a photo with this musical hero after the show. As his encore made clear, Richie is "[Still Fine After All These Years](#)." The Empty Pockets opened. Venue: [The City Winery](#), March 18.

5) From one founding member of a groundbreaking band to another. Any Neil Young concert promises to be different from before. You needed to catch Richie if you sought to hear any of Neil's Springfield tunes live. Neil's prolific catalogue allows him to put on a great concert without any material from either "Buffalo Springfield" or "Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young." The enigmatic Neil did just that as he teamed with Willie Nelson's boys in a formation he calls, "The Promise of the Real" to rock out Jones Beach (July 21). Opening solo on piano, Neil sang "[After The Gold Rush](#)," switching to acoustic guitar for "[Heart Of Gold](#)," the Stills-Young Band classic, "[Long May You Run](#)" (from the one "Stills-Young Band" LP) and "[Old Man](#)". He emphasized tunes from his latest CD, "[The Monsanto Years](#)". The band really rocked and channeled Crazy Horse on "[Down By The River](#)" and the encore, "[Cortez The Killer](#)". Opening trio, Puss n Boots (Nora Jones, Catherine "Cat" Popper and Sasha Dobson), were a real treat.

6) Always wonderful to check out a real Beach Boys lineup. Probably unfairly, I view the current troupe fronted by Mike Love, almost a cover band. The innovator behind their sound tours as a solo artist but covers the material he wrote, produced and arranged. Fellow Beach Boy Al Jardine joined this touring band with his son, Matt (sang lead on [Wouldn't It Be Nice](#)) and helps give it even more of a [Beach Boys flavor](#). A special treat was Blondie Chaplin, a mid-70s band member who sang lead on the classic, "[Sail On Sailor](#)" from their Holland LP. The band sounded as crisp as any studio grouping but with the energy you get when folks perform live. You leave with a smile. The surf songs, the car songs, and the more experimental, including "Good Vibrations" (the set closer) and "Heroes and Villains." A nice [six song encore](#): "All Summer Long," "[Help Me, Rhonda](#)" (Al Jardine lead vocal), "Barbara Ann" (Matt Jardine on high lead), "Surfin' U.S.A.," "Fun, Fun, Fun" and "Love and Mercy." Of course at the (Jones) Beach not long after summer started (June 30).

7) I promised my daughter Marisa, to take her to see The Who. She also was excited to see Joan Jett & The Blackhearts who opened. Roger and Pete and band played a good sample of their music, opening with "[I Can't Explain](#)." They also rocked "[My Generation](#)" and concluded with two classics from Who's Next, "Baba O'Riley" and "[Won't Get Fooled Again](#)." If you like The Who in all its various creative turn including "Tommy" ("Amazing Journey," "Pinball Wizard" and "[We're Not Gonna Take It \(See Me, Feel Me\)](#)") and Quadrophenia," ("[Love Reign O'er Me](#)" is a fave) or if you sought to introduce offspring or someone unknowing of The Who to the band's full catalogue, this concert served that purpose rather well. While totally unnecessary to placing the concert in this year's top ten, Jett and her hearts played a very strong set including her cover of Springsteen's "Light Of Day." Venue: Nassau Coliseum (May 20)

8) Dave Mason & The Feelin' Alright Band (Dave Mason's Traffic Jam). I can't recall disappointment at any Dave Mason show. Of late Dave has included a Traffic theme and when you love his early material, it can only thrill you. The first set was only Traffic including "[40,000 Headmen](#)," "[Medicated Goo](#)" and a bluesy "[Dear Mr. Fantasy](#)." The 2<sup>nd</sup> set included his later hits "[We Just Disagree](#)" and "Let It Flow" but heavily included material from one of the all-time great LPs, "Alone Together," including "[Shouldn't Have Took More Than You Gave](#)" and "Only You Know And I Know" which preceded his Traffic classic, "[Feelin' Alright](#)" to close the show. He encored with Dylan's "[All Along The Watchtower](#)" (he played on the Hendrix cover and included it on a solo LP). Venue: City Winery ( July 22)

9) This was a last minute decision. I learned John Fogerty joined the bill. We made the arrangements the day of the December 5 show at the Theatre at Madison Square Garden. Many notable performers from many popular musical genres graced the stage with excellent covers of Lennon's Beatles and solo work. Fogerty set the tone with "Give Peace A Chance." Peter Frampton sang "Norwegian Wood" and was joined by Sheryl Crow and Aloe Blacc on "Happy Christmas (Was Is Over)." Juanes did well on "Woman" and Blacc covered "Steel and Glass" with great emotion. Spoon did justice to "Cold Turkey" and "Hey Bulldog." Brandon Flowers delivered "Instant Karma" and Eric Church owned "Mind Games." The backing band which included Fogerty's drummer extraordinaire Kenny Aronoff and Leland Sklar of The Wrecking Crew on bass excelled throughout. [View](#) the concert on AMC.com (though the broadcast re-arranged the order in which the songs got performed; surprised?)

10) One of the best ever bands to come out of Greater New York remains "The Young Rascals" later shortened to "The Rascals." It was a real treat to catch one of the original reunion multimedia shows at The Capitol Theatre in Westchester three years back. This time, audience members got to enjoy Felix Cavaliere's Rascals with Gene Cornish sitting in. Felix retains his soulful voice and stage presence. You get a lift as he opens with "Midnight Hour," "You Better Run" and "Come On Up." He embraced the hits including "A Beautiful Morning" and "[A Girl Like You](#)." Original Rascal Guitarist Gene Cornish added his harmonica to a lovely "[Groovin](#)" which segued to covers to "My Girl" and "Just My Imagination" before returning to "Groovin'." "[Lonely Too Long](#)" offered more the usual lift I get hearing the studio cut. They closed with a riveting "[Good Lovin](#)," which really stirred with Cornish playing his distinctive riffs.

Honorable mentions: Heart and The Steve Miller Band