

Corey's Top 10 2016 Concerts

As 2016 ends and we look forward to 2017, I share my top ten concerts for the past year. This represents the sixth installment in this “series.”

This past year, my wife was again my partner at all but two concerts I attended this year. Her presence indicated the predominance of weekend and summer shows this year. This year also marked a sharp reduction from the recent past years in the number of shows we took in; not sure the reason but several featured multiple artists offering nice variety.

1) We concluded the year with an excellent tribute concert to John Lennon at the Symphony Space in Manhattan. It featured Donovan, Paula Cole, Willie Nile, Toshi Reagon, The Kennedys and Rich Pagano of the Fab Faux. The house band also featured Fab Faux’s Jack Petruzzelli. Our friends, Vincent and Susan Russo procured the tickets. Donovan provided a nice mix of his own and Beatles cover including Catch The Wind, Norwegian Wood, Sunshine Superman, Season of the Witch which channeled the Al Kooper Super Session arrangement in intensity, While My Guitar Gently Weeps. Toshi Reagon offered a sincere take on Instant Karma. Paula Cole cover Mother and Beautiful Boy. Willie Nile covered Revolution. The Kennedys offered a fresh takes on From Me To You, Tell Me Why and Please Please Me. The amazing encores include Paula Cole on Imagine and all on one my faves, Eight Day A Week. Date: December 3.

2) Our first date was the play Leader of the Pack, off Broadway at the long-gone and much-missed The Bottom Line. So attending Beautiful, The Carole King Musical for Shelly birthday, made for a nice evening. You know the songs and most of the story. Great songs, not just by Carole King and in partnership with then-hubby Gerry Goffin but classics as well by (Barry) Mann- (Cynthia) Weil. What amazes is you think you know some songwriters’ catalogues and then you hear a song you do not associate with either writing pain (Chains, You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling). Highlights included I Feel The Earth Move, It’s Too Late, One Fine Day, Up On The Roof, Chains and Some Kind Of Wonderful. Date: October 15.

3) One of my fave all-time crooners, Paul Rodgers fronted two really great bands that offer many of my fave tunes. Paul sang all the Bad Company hits and some deep cut FM staples. Highlights included the encores, Bad Company and Can’t Get Enough. Joe Walsh late of Eagles and original James Gang leader opened this show. Arguably this made for a great twofer at Jones Beach. He opened with Walk Away and closed with Rocky Mountain Way, and even cover Take It To The Limit in memory of Glenn Frey. Date: June 14.

4) The Gregg Allman Laidback Festival certainly lived up to his bill with artists you

would enjoy and stand alone shows: Marshall Tucker, America, Orleans, Devon Allman and Gregg himself. Orleans with former Congressman John Hall, its primary songwriter back in the folder really excelled, concluding their set with a rousing Still The One. America primarily played its hits and for me, the encore Horse With No Name sounded as fresh as the first time on the radio and later at Central Park. Devon Allman demonstrated he stands on his own; he did a great cover of No Woman No Cry. Gregg made my day with his version of Aint Wastin' Time No More (from Eat A Peach). While the Allmans may be no more, Gregg led a hot band. Venue: Jones Beach, July 23.

5) Mark Farner wrote and sang one of my fave songs, I'm Your Captain/ Closer To Home. He delivered it fresh and impassioned, dedicating it to our veterans. Folks who found Grand Funk Railroad from their hit singles day certainly left happy as Mark recreated GFR's covers of The Locomotion and Some Kind of Wonderful as well as the band's own staples, Bad Time and We're An American Band. He also gave new life to Neil Young's Ohio. (B.B. Kings, July 30).

6) Jim Messina played major roles in two of my fave bands, Poco and Loggins and Messina, and helped guide Buffalo Springfield to sound Last Time Around. He lead a strong band at a free concert for Great Neck residents (and their guests) at Steppingstone Waterside Theatre. His set included Richie Furay's Springfield turned Poco classic, Kind Woman, his own Poco classic, You Better Think Twice, Follow Your Dreams from the 1989 reunion of the first Poco lineup, and Loggins and Messina classic Be Free, Same Old Wine, Changes and their hit, Your Mama Can't Dance. Date: July 17.

7) Queens native Al Kooper is one of our heroes. I enjoy corresponding with him when he so chooses. He covered his career from Blood Sweat and Tears (cover of Randy Newman's Just One Smile, Blues Project (I Can't Keep From Cryin' Sometimes). Super Session (Donovan's Season Of The Witch), and more recent solo work (Got My Ion Hue). Good music. Fun stories. And great backing band, The Funky Faculty. Venue: B.B. Kings (June 9).

8) Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes always delivers exuberance and energy. You always want to let your freak go at his shows. Highlights included This Time It's For Real, Talk To Me, I Don't Want To Go Home, The Fever and Having A Party. Venue: B.B. Kings, (July 30).

9-10) This as billed as a multi-artist show and sure was. There was curiosity; I was unsure of how one band would function absent founder Paul Kantner who we lost as the year began. I never got to see Mitch Ryder before, Rick Derringer is one of the great guitarists and ruled as band leader and sideman. Add to that Mark Farner who I discussed in his solo gig (please see above). Ryder delivered impassioned recreations of 40-year old hits that merited later covers by others including Bruce Springsteen (Recall

the No-Nukes Concert Detroit medley.). I still have my 45 with Devil With A Blue Dress-Good Golly Miss Molly. Derringer sang Hang On Sloopy from his teen idol days leading the McCoys and Rock & Roll Hoochie Koo, his song that Johnny Winter also covered and made an FM-radio staple. Only David Freiberg remains from the first iteration of Jefferson Starship; they covered Airplane (Somebody to To Love, White Rabbit) and Starship (Miracles) hits, even from the Mickey Thomas era (We Built This City, a staple of the musical, Rock of Ages); and of course they covered Volunteers.
Date: August 6.