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MUSICIAN/ADVENTURER RICK SCHULER:

JOHN DENVER, INDIANA JONES, AND MYSTERIES OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS ALL ROLLED UP INTO ONE AS HE SPREADS A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND EARTH LOVE

*Los Angeles, Ca.* - How do you explain the inexplicable? You don’t, you just go with it.

Ever since singer, songwriter and adventurer **Rick Schuler** wore his first pair of round glasses at 13, the murmurs began. It was undeniable, he looked like John Denver, an artist he’d never heard of until that moment.

It was during an era when the music of John Denver permeated the airwaves with sweetness and sunshine, a salve to the wounded and weary soldiers returning home unloved from an unpopular war.

“John Denver was the biggest star in the world, and I didn’t have any idea who he was,” says Schuler, who quickly discovered that Denver was the guy on the radio whose music he loved. “I was a very shy kid and John and I kind of became bonded. I taught myself to play guitar and it grew from there.”

Nearly four decades later, Schuler has emerged as the leading performer of John Denver’s music. His Rocky Mountain High Experience® is just that, a true experience. Even John’s own bandmates sing his praises.

Schuler not only sings, sounds, and looks like Denver, he shares his humanitarian spirit and incorporates his global works into the show. He performs in front of thousands of Denver fans at such wide-ranging venues as performing art centers, theatres, and outdoor festival stages, and has been featured on nationally syndicated television and radio shows.

***FAITH IN CAVES***

In addition to his musical endeavors, Schuler is part of a core team of international and interfaith archaeologists who just discovered the twelfth Dead Sea Scroll Cave. The team is led by Dr. Oren Gutfeld, Hebrew University, and Dr. Randall Price, Liberty University in Virginia, who are among the scholars who started excavating the Qumran Plateau in 2002 and moved into the caves this year.

Schuler says each member of the team is united by a desire to find more Dead Sea Scrolls. And somehow, the music of John Denver has become a muse for the mission. It’s an easy equation, says Schuler.

“The longing for home, love, and for God through nature are resonant themes found in the Scrolls and in John's hit songs.  They strike the same eternal chord together uniting humanity of the past, present, and future.

“I can be in any part of the world and if I start to play a note of ‘Country Roads’ or ‘Rocky Mountain High’ everyone joins in. I feel like the pied piper everywhere I go. People sing along with me to these really beautiful, harmonious songs of love and healing. Regardless of their language of origin, they sing-a-long in English.”

Schuler says critics didn’t understand John when he was alive.

“They thought he was Pollyanna and superficial, but what they didn’t grasp is the deep, deep soulfulness in his music. He had a lot of pain in his life, and he expressed that pain in such beautiful melodies, tapping into other people’s pain too, speaking to the pain of a generation. Of all the songs of his I sing it’s ‘Sunshine’ that makes more people cry than any of them.”

In addition, in the lyrics of “Rocky Mountain High,” there are whispers of a protest song, as timely a message now than ever. And in typical Denver fashion, the protest comes in the form of uniting people in spirit, rather than dividing them.

“There’s a line in there ‘why they try to tear the mountains down to bring in a couple more, more people more scars upon the land,’” says Schuler. “He actually stopped the Olympics from coming to Aspen because of that, so John actually did sing a lot of protest songs, particularly about the war in Vietnam.”

***ENCOUNTERS***

When Schuler’s not in Israel unearthing mysteries of the past or working as an IT specialist, he can often be found performing with various members of Denver’s band, who marvel at the likeness and pitch perfect timbre in Schuler’s vocals.

“The very first time John’s manager from the ‘80s, Doug Belscher, met me in Aspen, he expressed his astonishment at how strikingly similar I was to his dear friend. Since that time and before I’ve had a lot of folks close to John express their experiences similar to this. I feel deeply connected to John not just through his music and his lyrics but also because we are both sensitive souls. As a Christian, I believe very much in God, and I believe in super-intention and those are things that we may not fully understand but I believe there’s evidence everywhere.”

***FINDING HIS NICHE***

It’s been 20 years since Denver passed away, and Schuler says he remembers the sorrow he felt on that day, but he also acknowledges he was deeply moved by God in a mysterious way.

“I remember realizing that maybe now I would be able to carry John’s message for him,” he says. “His message so clearly is one of love for God, love for the earth, peace, as well as love for humanity. It’s the same with the archaeological work I’m a part of.”

The Qumran Cliffs of Israel are a long way away from Monroe, Louisiana, where Schuler was born. But digging into crevices and unearthing pickaxes of the Bedouin thieves long since passed away, is part of what makes this artist tick.

Despite the excitement and international spotlight that comes with finding the first Dead Sea Scroll cave in 60 years, he says much of the magic is simply in the process, like when it’s time to sing songs around the campfire on archaeological digs at night. He says it’s a vision straight out of Lawrence of Arabia. As the small team of professionals, among them people of Jewish, Christian and Muslims faiths, all bond together over their shared desire to tell the stories of history through earth excavations.

“We found a wine jug with handles and a lid and it had been sealed for 2000 years,” says Schuler. “The smell of it was so sweet, and to have an olfactory connection to something 2000 years old, if that doesn’t hook you on archaeology I don’t know what could.”

Although the latest scroll they unearthed last month appears to be blank, Schuler says, “We won’t know anything until we do multi-spectral imaging. If indeed this scroll has writing on it, it’ll be big news around the world.”

**POEMS, PRAYERS AND PROMISES**

It’s uncanny how strangers feel immediately connected to Schuler, simply because he mirrors Denver in both body and spirit. And despite his death two decades ago, his music continues to touch the world, with more than a hundred million views of Denver videos on YouTube.

“John was a romantic, an anti-materialist in a materialist world, who sang from his heart while bearing his soul. I share that with him, and that connects me with people.”

In addition, he says, history is also the great connector.

“C.S. Lewis said it best when he stated one should read old books to let the breezes of the centuries blow through your mind. That’s what the Dead Sea Scrolls are all about. And that’s what John’s music and art taps into, that greater consciousness that is basically timeless.”

In addition to performing Denver’s hits, Schuler writes and performs hits of his own, including “Rainmaker,” a theme song that plays in 35 million homes each week.

Among its lyrics is a Schuler maxim: *“Live to inspire, and to be inspired…”*

He has four albums on iTunes and among his latest gems is “Golden Days of Aspen Glow,” a beautiful song he wrote to pay tribute to John Denver and Dan Fogelberg, the footsteps that he’s walking in.

*“As we fling our souls deep into the breeze, life colors us and all our memories…”*

He also performs the Lord’s Prayer in Hebrew, as a way to transport his listeners into the caves of Qumran, and then he has his audience sing the lyrics in English.

“One of my favorite poets, Rilke, wrote, ‘Music is the language where all language ends.’ That’s how I feel about John’s message. I’m just grateful to be a torchbearer of his legacy.”

For an EPK and more info about Rick Schuler and his Rocky Mountain High Experience®, the Qumran Plateau and the Dead Sea Scrolls, go to [www.SunshineRick.com](http://www.SunshineRick.com). For press information, to set up an interview, or for press tickets for Rick’s upcoming shows, please contact Susan von Seggern on susan@susanvonseggern.com or 213-840-0077.

*(Thank you Heidi Siegmund Cuda for the words*