

Muskegon Chronicle

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Attendance: 1,600.

High point: Kennedy quipping with audience members through his almost two-hour performance.

Low point: A tone deaf audience attempting to harmonize on one of Kennedy's new songs about what else? Beer.

Review: This is Irish "craic" at it's best. For all you non-Irish folk, "craic means good music, good company and good times. And that's exactly what Seamus Kennedy delivers. In fact, if Tommy Makem is the godfather of Irish music, Kennedy is the father of Irish comedy. This guy is hilarious. His antics alone could entertain an audience for the evening.

That's not to say he's not a good musician. Kennedy's strong in both song and instrument with a repertoire of tunes that never seems to end. He effortlessly delivers smooth picking on a guitar faced with a large Guinness logo of which he says he had to drink 50,000 gallons to earn enough points to win. "That was the roughest four days of my life," he joked.

He began his first of two sets asking about his white knit knee socks, plaid kilt, Hawaiian shirt and green ball cap, "Does this clash?"

He then launched into "Whiskey in the Jar", pausing part way through the first few words to pose for a photo. If you've seen Kennedy before (he's here every year), you know that audience participation is a must and no one is safe from his punchy jokes.

He coaxed the audience into clapping along, only to pick out one group to hassle. "You three gotta stop clapping. You're throwing everyone else off." During the song "Scotland the Brave", a charming couple stepped a traditional Irish dance while a younger couple did what he called "the seizure."

Kennedy did more than pick on the adolescents in the audience. During the children's song "The Unicorn", he invited kids to face the audience and perform a dance.

"He's a lot of fun to watch because he's comedic and musical and family-oriented," laughed Daniel Zarembe of North Muskegon. Family-oriented with quite a few tongue-in-cheek jokes of which he told parents, "Don't worry, it's above their heads. And if it isn't, they didn't learn it from me."

The constant barrage of one-liners and beer talk seemed to end as he took the stage for his second set singing a touching ballad from his upcoming album (due in December). Seriousness didn't last, however, as he excused himself to answer his "cell phone," which turned out to be a flask.

"Can you hear me now?" he asked after taking a hardy swig.

"All of the Hard Days Are Gone" received rave applause as if many people could still find the energy to clap after all the side-splitting laughter.

After the laughter died, he pulled out a beautiful vocal performance of "Let the Music Take You Home." The evening ended with Kennedy saying, "Goodnight and joy be with you all."

"I think he's wonderful. Just hilarious. I'm going to tell my friends to come see him," said Claudette Johnson visiting from Dallas.

