

It's Saturday, February the 13th and despite the bitterly cold temperature, the late afternoon the sun was setting it's course into a sort of "pre spring" kind of light show as it slowly sank behind the bleak deciduous tree limbs looking westward.

Winterfolk is in full swing here in TO town and the cold weather clearly is not getting in the way of sold out crowds packing the venues along Toronto's Danforth strip.

It's a quiet lazy day at the Joneses so we're just home relaxing. I was unable to buy a ticket for the Black Swan gig as it was completely sold out with no standing room. Most of the facilities where the Winterfolk gigs are held are smaller type rooms and the fire regulations have to be strictly adhered to.

Very disappointing as I knew Rick Haynes was invited to play bass with his friend, singer/songwriter, Nicole Coward who was scheduled to be on stage at 3PM It would have been nice to have an opportunity to see that rare performance.

The telephone is ringing and the name showing up on the screen is Paul Bartlett. When Paul phones me it's usually about getting together for a gig and it's usually "Lightfoot connected." Always very exciting.

He's calling to tell me that he just got home after having played lead guitar with Rick Haynes on the same stage at the Black Swan. Gasp!

"Paul, I need to hear more. Tell me."

Paul was lying down having a nap when he received a call from John Stinson, lead singer in the Gordon Lightfoot Tribute band asking if he could be at the Black Swan in thirty minutes and "bring your guitar."

Fortunately Paul lives in the Danforth area close by and makes his way to the Black Swan, axe in hand and struggles to get through the throngs of people lined up waiting to get in. He has to convince the attendant that he's part of the band and to please let him get through asap. Such is life in the music business.

It seems that Nicole had heard John and the boys play previously and was quite impressed. She contacted John and invited him and Paul to join them on stage.

Paul and John both are students of Red Shea, Gord's former lead guitar player, and Rick of course had played on stage with Red many times. I would say there would be lots of familiar lead licks kicking in there to compliment the bass notes coming from Rick. And that "Lightfoot voice" of John Stinson ringing out in the room - how could you top that! Seemed like a match made in Heaven.

Paul was ecstatic when I spoke with him. He said Rick was great and a very nice man. Shared lots of technical stuff re tuning etc. Lots of stars all around. So sorry to have missed such an event but so happy to hear all the good news. Winterfolk is alive and well in Toronto.

