

A Good, Old Fashioned DUEL

By Firestone Davis
River City Times

At The Waterhouse, it is a pretty good crowd for a Friday. The regular crowd has, in fact, shuffled in, and yes, they sit at the bar (well, mostly at tables, but some people stand at the bar) and they do put bread in the jar ... OK. It's obvious the Billy Joel parallel doesn't fly. The fact is, in River City, "Piano Man" parallels are few and far between.

Take the duel going on this weekend at The Waterhouse between Dave Roberts and Dan Gillogly Kirk for example. Far from the "Man, what're you doin' here?" query, their Dueling Pianos performances prove they know just what they're doing.

Roberts has had multiple appearances on The Oprah Winfrey Show, and has performed at Soldier Field, Grant Park, "New York, NY" in Las Vegas, and has played London, Paris, Norway, and Times Square. He's even had several hits on the Billboard Top Ten. Dave is a member of "Dueling Pianos International"

Gillogly leads Glo Glee Music, and "PianoMan Dan" is not only sharp on the ivories, but he's an entertainer who can read the room like a billboard. With a 10 year stint at The Second City Theater under his belt,

where as Music Director of the world famous improv cabaret he scored eight award winning revues, he honed his intuitive values, a necessity for great improvisation ... which is what successful music for any event truly is.

Other players who rotate on a weekly basis at The Waterhouse include Steve Kouba, Chicago Rose, Gary Mumford and Mister Sam. They have also had Dana Ashworth (Key West), Dan Brady (New Orleans), James Brown (Detroit, MI), Mick Archer (Chicago), and Desiree Irwin (Chicago) perform.

Andrew Driscoll, owner of the Waterhouse, took time out this week to answer RCT's probing questions:

So where, and what is The Waterhouse?

The Waterhouse is a unique banquet facility in downtown Peoria with wood floors and exposed brick walls on the second floor of the Le Vieux Carre' complex (which also houses Kelleher's Irish Pub, Rizzi's on State, The Big Easy Café, and Rhodell's Brewery).

However, prior to the Waterhouse taking over the space it was the home to a couple different entertainment based businesses including Haberdasher's Dinner Playhouse and Brewster's Comedy Club. In 2003, the space underwent some upgrades and was

turned into the Waterhouse, becoming not only a special location for a banquet but also a great place to hear live music.

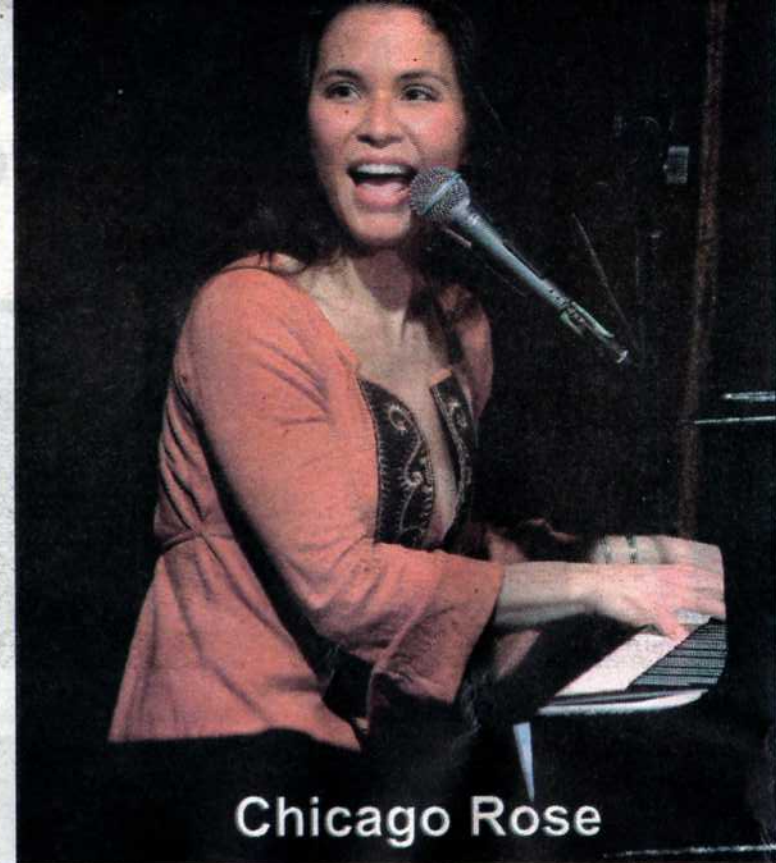
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How did you find your current space, and do people still have trouble finding you?

I had always wanted to work with Pat Sullivan and John Hunt, (owners of Le Vieux Carre' and many other downtown buildings) and jumped at the chance to be involved there. To find the Waterhouse all we have to say is Kelleher's or Peoria's downtown post office and they have no problem ... however, that is changing as more and more people are making our venue part of their routine.

How/When did Dueling Pianos come about?

My experience is in the entertainment industry from music to theatre to film. As



Chicago Rose

happy as I am with a thriving banquet business, I needed to produce something that would utilize the experience that I have gained over the past 13 years in the entertainment business. I wanted something that would not cost much, would appeal to the broadest audience, and that was FUN! I went to a Dueling Pianos show ... and the rest is history.

Starting in March 2005, we exposed the Central Illinois audience to this wildly entertaining format for six months on the last Friday of the month.

This allowed us to test the waters and see how the Peoria area would respond. Of course it was a huge hit, and so in September we went to every Friday night. (Saturdays are the main day for receptions and banquets so this worked out perfectly.) The show continued to pull a great audience and in December we even combined the com-