



Luke Soup by Luke Anderson

Music is incredible. It has a power like nothing else on earth to enter our bodies and massage our insides.

Certain lyrics or rhythms can instantly take us back to different stages in our lives, just as quickly as music can magically unearth a forgotten emotion tied to a time or certain event. There are a number of songs in my collection of albums that hold such power and one of them is featured on a JJ Cale album. The CD skips like crazy -- probably from me listening to it so much -- and there is one part during my favourite song that I have to fast forward because it gets stuck on a drum beat, which drives me mad!

When I found out that JJ Cale and his band were coming to perform in the big city I set my mind on going. When I read the details, I discovered that the concert was that night at a venue that I knew little about. With a sigh of disappointment, I phoned TicketMaster to see if tickets were still available and to find out about the venue's accessibility. After a lengthy wait I was delivered some expected bad news; the show was sold out. However, I was told I could get into the venue with my wheelchair... one thumb up.

With a few hours left before showtime

I phoned around to see if I could round up some fellow JJ Cale compadres. When that failed I began to believe that my mission was destined not to happen. Without a friend, who would help me handle my money and buy my ticket -- should one exist -- and who would help me with a drink when I got inside? I sighed again, more disappointed than ever. Just when I was about to stick a fork in my plans, my stubborn side piped up and said, "Get your behind down there and figure it out!"

The bar was down in a really great part of the city where something is always happening. The doors hadn't opened yet and a long line wrapped itself along the front and around the corner of the building. I cruised down the line in search of an extra ticket. Not having any luck, I parked myself on the sidewalk and waited patiently.

Moments later I overheard a couple scheming about their similar ticketless situation, so I wheeled over and introduced myself and we combined forces. A scalper nearby was trying to sell his tickets for more than twice the regular price, but we held out.

During that time, while the three of us waited with our fingers crossed, we took turns asking around to see if anyone had an extra ticket. We soon became arch

enemies with the scalper as he repeatedly beat us to someone selling extra tickets. I felt like backing over him when he bought two tickets from a lady for their regular price, then spun around and asked us if we wanted to buy them for triple the price.

The three of us chatted about shows that we had seen lately and I learned that they were from Halifax on a cross-country road trip. They shared some of their road trip stories with me and I asked if they could give me a hand handling my money in order to buy my ticket. They accepted the task without question.

About 10 minutes after the doors opened, one of the bouncers who had noticed our efforts to find tickets approached us and secretly revealed to us that there were five extra tickets inside. I wheeled in with my new east coast buds and told them to grab my ticket money from my shirt pocket... a piece of cake.

I quickly learned that a busy bar (standing room only) is not the best place for me to catch a concert. I had a fairly good spot near the back of the bar; however, people kept parking right in front of me. Thankfully there was some good karma in the air and a couple of people nearby took it upon themselves to be my personal bodyguards. Their tac-

tic for letting somebody know that they were in my line of sight was a tap on the shoulder.

This tactic usually worked, but not for those who were a little deeper into the sauce than others, who required a bit more force. The show was awesome and I enjoyed a fairly clear sightline for most of it, and ended up with only one drunk guy nearly falling on my lap.

Like many others in the audience, after the concert I hung around outside the bar and chatted with some people about the show. Not wanting to miss the last subway I hurried over to the station, got someone to help me with my fare, boarded the elevator that took me to the train level and hopped on the subway... homeward bound.

Through adventures like this one I have come to learn that most people are genuinely interested and some (like my bodyguards) determined to help out. The odd individual will either not accept my request or pretend they didn't hear me. With the not so helpful kind, I just hope I can open their eyes to the world of people living with disabilities, plant a seed perhaps.

Thankfully I can rely on those who are interested, because they give my life independence, spontaneity, camaraderie and fulfillment... two thumbs up.

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