

## Davies, elder statesman, tends to legacy of Kinks

By Michael Hochanadel

ALBANY — Rude duck calls rang out through The Egg on Tuesday and a mock-shocked Ray Davies exclaimed, “An elder statesman of rock ‘n’ roll, and I get ‘Ducks on The Wall’!”

Then he surrendered and sang a bit of it, accompanied by more duck calls.

As with any elder statesman, Davies’ show was about legacy and how to use it. Before he summoned his band onstage to replicate the Kinks’ sound, he and guitarist Bill Shanley did duo versions of Kinks classics and solo-album tracks — material he and brother Dave pioneered. These intimate duets took on the relaxed rollicking flavor of “Sunny Afternoon,” which Davies said he’d written for his father to sing in the pub. The Egg’s jam-packed (larger) Hart Theater felt very pub-like as fans sang along on almost everything, whether Davies asked them to or not. “I’m Not Like Everybody Else” took on a wicked irony as fans formed a big chorus to claim, in unison, their individuality.

Scratchy at the start, Davies’ voice was strong and focused by “Waterloo Sunset,” perhaps the prettiest-ever Kinks’ song, with the crowd spiritedly singing the “sha-la-la” chorus. They even recognized and sang the refrain to “Autumn Almanac,” a jaunty ditty about gardening, the strangeness of which he happily acknowledged. After a soft, sincere croon through “A Long Way from Home,” Davies truncated “Victoria” to read a passage about conformity versus individuality from “X-Ray,” his autobiography. “20th Century Man” continued the argument, the band joining in to rock it hard and Davies turning to relish drummer Damon Wilson’s thrashing beat.

As rock momentum pumped up the volume, the show seemed to lose focus, some songs feeling perfunctory and band intros rushed. However, “Nothing In the World,” recalling Davies’ first romantic break-up, summoned the band’s full energy and falsetto flourishes by Davies. Then “Celluloid Heroes,” powered by fans’ recognition and singalong, revved things up.

Kinks’ riff-blasts “Til the End of the Day” and “All Day and All of the Night” rocked the house, Davies jumping up and down and pumping the crowd with his familiar “Way-O!” chant. “You Really Got Me” wrapped up everything.

It wasn’t the Kinks, but it was an elder statesman tending to his legacy before fans happy to help.

David Wax Museum had to charm everybody to defeat the glaring incongruity of a young Mexican-inspired folkloric duo opening for a crashing-loud rock band. Wax played acoustic guitar and the uke-sized jarana jarocho while Suz Slezak played fiddle or quijada, a donkey jawbone fashioned into an effective percussion device. “Yes Marie” rooted the show in Mexico while “Beatrice” sounded more Anglo, but “Chucho Bey” (about dancing belly button to belly button and therefore outlawed for generations) went back to Mexico, Veracruz, specifically.

Their American-ish folk stuff ranged from the soft ballad “How I Love When You Are Still” to the rousing “Tunnels.” Both sang well and their songs and spunky presentation held up surprisingly well to the expectations of Davies’ rock-minded boomer-age fans.