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Wells of faith

Preacher man's son Tyrone Wells sings at the 'Bird

Audibles with Dan ColemanThe Scene | audibles@heraldt.com
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Dusty Springfield famously sang that the only one who could ever move her was the son of a preacher man. Following in the footsteps of Marvin Gaye and Sam Cooke, pop-crooner Tyrone Wells has taken the passion instilled in him from his father's pulpit and poured it into creating a soulful blend of folk and pop that has won him fans across the West Coast and hopefully beyond.

"With a lot of the gospel stuff, the singers are very soulful. I think it was kind of a natural progression, so what I was digging was stuff like Stevie Wonder and Motown," Wells said. "So I don't know what came first; a lot of that stuff was in the church, too."

Wells started his musical journey as vocalist for the late '90s Christian rock band Skypark. In 2000, Wells opted to go solo with little more than his voice and a head full of ideas, forcing the budding songwriter to start his career from the bottom up. So he did what any wandering minstrel would do — he walked into a California coffee shop and asked for a chance.

"It was definitely grass roots because I wasn't prepared for anything else, because I could sing but I could hardly play guitar at all. I don't know if anybody is going to come and listen to me, but I'm going to go book this little show and try and get good at accompanying myself and writing my songs and trying them out on a wide audience," Wells recalled.

"So for me, it was kind of me cutting my teeth on being able to accompany myself. So I just booked that weekly show at the coffee shop, and that turned into a four-year residency. That became where I grew and where I found where I wanted to be musically."

Wells' coffee shop gigs soon drew lines around the block, and the folk-pop singer graduated to sold-out shows at the House of Blues and the El Rey theater. His music began popping up on TV shows such as "Rescue Me" and "One Tree Hill." This past February, Wells released his major label debut, "Hold On," and set out on the road.

The end result of years of coffee-shop stages and out-of-trunk CD sales is a collection of soulful pop songs dealing with love and life in a world of uncertainty. Wells has no musical agenda, rather a desire simply to bring the passions that move him to anyone who will listen.

"My process is just each song is its own statement. I'm not like most guys who try to make one dramatic statement over the course of a record, or the course of several records. I sit down with a song, and I come and go where it leads me," Wells said. "I don't typically come to a song with a lot of preconceived ideas about what I want it to be. A lot of times, it flushes itself out in the writing. I might have one idea, and that will blossom into a complete idea, and I try my best to make everything fit together nicely in a song."

Wells plays the Bluebird Sunday with Leigh Nash, formerly of Sixpence None the Richer. Show is scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. Call 336-BIRD for ticket info.

WHO: Tyrone Wells with Leigh Nash (ex-Sixpence None the Richer)

WHEN: 9 p.m. Sunday



Tyrone Wells. Courtesy photo

WHERE: The Bluebird

HOW MUCH: \$8

INFO: 336-BIRD

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