

Stevie's Day | Allan Besselink

Written by Allan Besselink

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Today has been a day of reflection for me. For many, the coming of a new year is time for rejoicing and for reflecting upon what has passed and what awaits us for the year ahead. In many ways, January 1 is quite an arbitrary day in that it's merely the start of the calendar - but not necessarily a significant milestone in anyone's world.

The day that you arrived in the world - now that day has significance. It is with this in mind that I reflect upon another year - and look ahead to what lies in front of me. It is on this day that I find myself looking at the big picture of life, looking into the mirror for meaning, diving into my soul for tranquility and understanding - and peace.

Today will always be known as Stevie's Day to me. Perhaps that requires a little explanation.

On a day like today, I give thanks for many reasons. I give thanks for my health, for my friends and family, for those people close to me, and for the path that I have found myself upon after all these years. I give thanks for having insight into the ways of the world. I am thankful for having gone down a path that lead me to Austin, Texas - perhaps the best decision I've ever made, the best fork in the road upon which I've ever arrived.

I am thankful for that fateful day - in 1983 - when I first saw Stevie Ray Vaughan live on the hallowed stage of the National Arts Center in Ottawa. Little did I know then that that moment, frozen in time, would lead to me what would become my promised land.

I found myself exploring Austin - first by music, then by presence. There was something about this place that was just so right for my heart and my soul. In August of 1990 I packed up my things and moved to Austin. I had a guitar, some clothes, a book of photos, and not much more - a modern day Huckleberry Finn if you will.

On this day back in 1990, I awoke to my first birthday in Austin. I also awoke to the news - of Stevie Ray Vaughan's passing. And with those two events inextricably intertwined in my life, I have come to look upon August 27 as Stevie's Day.

Over the past 16 years, I have played his music on this day. Since the statue of him was erected in the early 90s, I have spent time reflecting there annually. If not for one year (when I found myself at a conference in the Netherlands on the all-important day), I would have a perfect record. Texas Flood sounds much more appropriate in Austin than it did in Maastricht - but the sentiment was there nonetheless. Over the past 16 years, I have given thanks - for the music, for the person, for the impact that something so simple would have on my world.

As luck would have it, I find myself within a stone's throw of his statue at least once a week - a subtle reminder of the need to remember - and be thankful - and to reflect - and to live in tranquility.

Tick tock tick tock tick tock people - time's ticking away

Thanks Stevie - you'll always be revered - and deeply missed. I didn't know you - but you welcomed me to your world, which then became my home. My deepest thanks to you - on this, Stevie's Day.