Bromberg to rock Convention Hall with blues, Americana

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — David Bromberg released a self-titled album in 1971 — a mix of blues, country, rock and a little gospel influence — that received airplay on rock stations and college radio. His guitar playing was stellar and his lyrics often funny or ironic.

Fast forward 51 years and Bromberg is on the road in the mid-Atlantic states with a performance set for Aug. 9 at Cape May Convention Hall.

He released albums throughout the 1970s and played guitar on many other artists’ albums, including working with two of the Beatles. Bromberg said he met George Harrison at a Thanksgiving dinner where they wrote a song together.

“He was a good guy, very unpretentious and very talented,” Bromberg said. Neither he nor Harrison had arrived for Thanksgiving dinner with a guitar, so they used a gut string beginner’s guitar belonging to the host’s daughter.

“We passed the guitar back and forth and without trying wrote a song,” Bromberg said. The song tells the story of holdup men with the lyric “wealth is the disease and I am the cure.”

Bromberg said his performance at the age of 15 when he visited a record store was a watershed moment for him, and that he wasPlay it in the radio. An early influence was a record he found in his parents’ house entitled “A Guide to Jazz” that Bromberg said was curated by a “French intellectual.”

Bromberg said he studied a track over and over again on the album, “Working Man Blues,” by Sleepy John Estes.

Bromberg took guitar lesson from blues legend the Rev. Gary Davis, paying him $5 per session.

“He was extraordinary, one of the best guitar players to walk the planet, but his singing was outstandingly good,” he said.

In 2020, Bromberg released a new album called “Big Road,” which received more radio airplay than any album he had released in decades, he said. Bromberg does not use a set list at his concerts. “We decide on the first tune, maybe the first two tunes before we start and then I just play what I feel like playing,” he said.

Among favorites you can expect to hear in Bromberg’s concert, “Diamond Lil” from his 1972 album with his chorus of “A man should never gamble more than he can stand to lose,” and the opening picking on “Tell Me, Baby, I’m Doin’ Time,” in which he tells listeners he doesn’t like to wear shoes.

See Bromberg, Page A12

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