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## Strung-Out Troubadours featuring Rik Emmett and Dave Dunlop

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Poor David's Pub  
Dallas, Texas  
Nov. 20, 2009

By A. Lee Graham

"Music holds the secret, to know it can make you whole"

Those words are manna from heaven for Triumph fans. Summoned to Dallas for a rare Rik Emmett appearance, a small-but-dedicated crowd sang along as the Triumph legend brought smiles and laughter to the faces of everyone.

The occasion was the latest stop by the Strung-Out Troubadours, Emmett's partnership with fellow guitarist Dave Dunlop that mixes acoustic guitar acumen with between-song banter that could hold its own even without music.

Like a rocked-up Smothers Brothers, Emmett and Dunlop tore through fiery flamenco, caressed smooth jazz licks and revisited some vintage Triumph tunes.

"Hold On," "Ordinary Man" and "Lay It On The Line" whisked fans back to the enornodomes of yesteryear as they sang along to every line. The only missing ingredient were Bic lighters — oh, and a certain herb.

"Fritos, Doritos," laughed Emmett, remembering band mates Gil Moore and Mike Levine leaving the stage and the guitarist shrouded in a "laser cone" and a cloud of marijuana smoke.

"I'd get the munchies," Emmett laughed, recalling his acoustic solo spot on Triumph tours.

The Dallas crowd enjoyed a reinvention of that sound with "Midsummer's Daydream," rearranged for Dunlop and Emmett to perform. Joking that anyone can play the intro — and has on numerous YouTube clips — Emmett separated the men from the boys by capturing the nuances, tones and sheer musicianship that make the composition such a delight.

Judging from several conversations throughout the room, many in attendance were unaware of Emmett's post-Triumph activity. And that's a shame, for *Absolutely*, *Spiral Notebook* and other solo discs offer quality music. So does his flamenco activity with Pavlo and Oscar Lopez. And lest we forget Airtime, the hard rockin' project that scored a hit with Triumph fans in 2007.

And the streak continues this year as Emmett and Dunlop bring seasoned showmanship and sidesplitting hilarity to nightclub stages. For all his consummate musicianship, Emmett could coast on the comedy alone.

Bemoaning middle-age body aches, poking fun at "silly hairdos" of the '80s and fearing optic damage from a guitar pedal board brought laughs from the audience.

Perhaps no moment confirmed their dedication more than "Ordinary Man." On the *Allied Forces* album, the lyric "That's the only answer" ends with "answer" echoing into the next verse. Not on this night. At Poor David's Pub, the audience provided its own echo!

Emmett smiled as his fans shouted the word "answer," confirming Triumph's place in their rock 'n' roll hearts.

Emmett and Dunlop rewarded that faith by hanging out after the show, signing autographs and posing for photos. When I mentioned that Reunion Arena had been demolished only days before the gig, Emmett instantly recalled the venue where Dallas enjoyed Triumph's *Allied Forces*, *Never Surrender*, *Thunder Seven* and *Sport of Kings* tours.

Poor David's Pub itself moved since Emmett's last gig at the venue, but one thing cannot be razed or relocated: the music pulsing within the hearts of Rik Emmett fans. They should (warning: Triumph pun ahead) follow their hearts and not miss the Strung-Out Troubadours.

And don't miss Andy Schmidt, the former Stir front man whose songwriting chops and powerhouse vocals opens the show.

[www.rikemmett.com](http://www.rikemmett.com)

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