



(photo credit: Matt Greco)

North Allen Duo are the recipients of the 2023 Listen Up Favorite Solo/Duo Cover Act. Kevin Calacone (left) and Matthew Greco first met and started playing music together in 2002 when the first North Allen lineup was a four-piece original band. Twenty years later, they now perform all over the Capital District as a cover duo.

1). What's more important, looking good or sounding good?

Kevin Calacone: Well...I'm not much to look at. So, I'll go with "sounding good."

Matthew Greco: Sound. Anytime a live performance sounds good, it feels good. So, it'll look good. Sound is everything and completes the package for entertainment.

2). How would you describe your sound, your overall image and what you are representing with your music?

MG: Our sound is based on one word: power. When you think of the word "acoustic," many people believe it's a couple of dudes singing old-timey folk songs around a campfire. We put on a show and leave it all out there on stage...or the deck...or the patio...or some grimey corner of a local establishment...in puddles of our own sweat. Our sound is raw and unprocessed; no fancy pedals, no backing tracks, no loopy things. Your signal chain starts with your fingers and ends with the audience dancing and singing along.

KC: I'd say that our sound is somewhat different than most other duos because we feature an acoustic guitar and an acoustic bass. That combination allows us to get a nice groove going, even without a drummer to help push things along. But when you get down to it, it's all about the energy. We're there to entertain you, and we try to put out an infectious energy that makes you want to have a good time

3). Where was your first show? Tell us a bit about it. Where was your last show and how different is it now from when you started?

KC: Our first show together was with the original North Allen lineup in June of 2002. We were an original band "trying to make it big." We played at a car show in Warrensburg and we didn't have enough material to play the whole gig. A couple weeks later we did the opening slot on a three band bill downstairs at Valentine's. Our first scheduled show as North Allen Duo got canceled due to the pandemic. When we were finally able to get out and play, our first gig was a private party. People weren't quite sure what to expect, but they loved us. That's when we knew we were onto something.

MG: Our first show was about a band with something to say and something to prove. Having had moderate success over the last 20 years, we continue the same routine before each show: practice, prepare, a little bit of butterflies, and somebody print the damn setlists.

KC: For the record...I print the damn setlists.

4). Which rockstar did you want to be as a kid?

MG: Dave Matthews. He single-handedly transformed how an acoustic guitar could fill a room and take stage in a rock band. Also, Johnny Rzeznik from The Goo Goo Dolls. He took an acoustic guitar from standard tuning and reinvented how a guitar could be tuned.

KC: John Bonham, no doubt. The amount of time I spent air drumming to Stairway to Heaven in my bedroom as a kid is ridiculous. My parents wouldn't allow me to get a drumset, so I took up playing guitar and then switched to bass.

5). Who has the best wings in the Capital District? For non-meat eaters, who has the best broccoli?

KC: I live in Albany, so I have to go with Graney's. But if we're talking about the greater Capital Region, don't sleep on the Raindancer in Amsterdam. Their wings are the real deal!

MG: Junior's. Order them now.

6). UFOs, real or fake?

KC: We are not alone.

MG: "We landed on the Moon?!?!" -Lloyd Christmas