



David Maracle on the flute, with his brother Jonathan Maracle on the guitar, as they play together at the Stage Red season finale.

‘MARACULOUS’ POWER OF MUSIC

PHOTOS AND STORY BY MAGGIE NAYLOR



Jonathan Maracle and his son play the native drum while singing.



David Maracle is absorbed in playing the pan drum for the season finale of Stage Red.

My first encounter with a Maracle was at Madoc’s 2014 Drum Nation Festival, and eventually he changed the way I thought about music. As I went from tent to tent on the premises of the event having my aura read, and being pressured to meditate with special oils while receiving angel cards, I wasn’t sure I was in the right place. I had imagined large crowds of people from far off places unable to contain their love for drumming.

Instead I was walking around in the rain unable to find shelter with people trying to my aura. I certainly did not belong, but was trying to be as objective as I could so I could write a story. Eventually I sat down under the performance tent and a woman told everyone to close their eyes and open their palms to receive the full power of relaxation produced from the sound of her running a stick around a large vase object resembling the sound of someone running their fingers around a wine glass. Just as I was deciding to run, or embrace my reality, David Maracle took to the stage.

He brought what looked to be a massive heavy-duty suitcase of wooden instruments I had never seen before. He started out

with a small drum and drumstick one of the only things I recognized and slowly got more and more elaborate as if to reward the people who stayed for the whole progression. You never knew what he was going to pull out next. After the small drum he took out a large wooden flute. I grew up with the Narnia books being read to me, and I immediately thought if I was ever to hear the flute noise Tumnus played to make Lucy fall asleep, it would have been the sound of David Maracle playing his flute. Once he got through a variety of flutes he brought several people up on stage to play together. They all got right into it, and when a young boy took this opportunity to jump up on stage and dance right next to David as he played, he was unphased. The boy stayed on the stage for the rest of the performance.

It is no surprise that when I saw he was having a season finale concert at Stage Red (his own stage performance courtyard) in Tyendinaga later that month I packed up to go shoot it.

When I arrived the performance had already started. I walked through the Stage Red wooden gates to a fairly crowded backstage trying not to knock anyone down with my outrageously

large and solid lighting bag. As I got there Maracle recognized me, and asked if I was hungry. I was, and he let me have some of the unbelievably good meal they were eating earlier. As I got to the stage, curling up on the rocks just below, I was witness to some exceptional talent. People coming from all over to take part in the season finale for Stage Red.

What stood out to me were the performances of the Maracle family. While some of their performances were of the modern music variety, they were determined to let their Mohawk ancestry shine through everything they produced. It was clear their music was not only for the audience but also for themselves.

Each bang of the drum and every breath of the flute was a spiritual experience.

It had me thinking about the connection we all have to music whether it be running a stick around a vase, playing a flute, or getting lost in an electrical guitar. Any form, whether it be understood by the audience or not gives leave to be respected. As Hans Christian Andersen had once said “Where words fail, music speaks.” For more work visit: <http://www.emaggienaylor.com/singles#1>



David Maracle, his wife Kimberly Maracle and his brother Jonathan Maracle play together with various artist friends to end off the season finale.



Jonathan Maracle in a trance, as he performs for the Stage Red season finale.