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*Jeff Daniels has found comedic inspiration from
Songwriter Christine Lavin. Read more in this article from:*

The New York Times

Just Jeff Daniels and His Guitar

By TAMMY LaGORCE

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That does not mean that those who buy tickets to his one-man show, “An Evening With [Jeff Daniels](#),” at Fairfield Theatre’s StageOne on Oct. 25, should expect an effortless or lackadaisical performance, though.

What they should expect, he suggested in a recent phone interview, is a freewheeling good time. “As an actor, when you’re inside or behind a character, there’s a filter between you and an audience — you don’t have the freedom you have when you walk out onto a stage with a guitar,” he said. “I like being able to talk to an audience. I like having an open conversation.”

So, apparently, do the crowds who have been lining up to see him since he started touring with his guitar in 2003.

Mr. Daniels, 55, who was nominated for a 2010 [Tony Award](#) for “God of Carnage” but is perhaps best known for his roles in films like “Terms of Endearment,” “The Squid and the Whale” and “Dumb & Dumber,” has been playing guitar since the 1970s; he has also recorded four albums. And though his singing voice has drawn comparisons to [Lyle Lovett](#) and [Bruce Springsteen](#), it may be best described as chameleonlike, he said.

“I do a song called ‘Forgive Me, Robert Johnson.’ There I’m just another white boy with the blues. But I’ve done musicals. I’m just the kind of guy who can do different stuff. Sometimes I approach a song by being myself. Sometimes I approach it as if it’s being acted.”

Often, though, he approaches his act as a chance to tell stories. Funny stories.

“I like songwriters like John Hiatt, John Prine, [Christine Lavin](#), [Loudon Wainwright](#),” he said. “Comedy is sometimes a second-class citizen in the arts,” he said. But “listening to them almost gave me permission to be funny.”

If there is a serious side to Mr. Daniels’s show, it is the mission behind it. In past years, Mr. Daniels performed the show for two weeks at Christmastime, as a way to raise money for the Purple Rose Theater, the professional theater company he started in Chelsea, Mich., in 1986. This year Mr. Daniels told his agents not to call him with new acting roles until January, as he plans to tour until Dec. 4. Throughout the nearly four-month tour, the longest span of time he has devoted to the show, proceeds from CD sales will benefit the theater.

But the extended run may have just as much to do with Mr. Daniels enjoying himself as it does with the need to step up fund-raising.

Suburban towns, like Fairfield, can be especially fun, he said.

“In the city, there’s a lot more to do than see an actor sing a song,” he said. “But in smaller places, people are cranked to come out. You get a lot of, ‘Thanks for coming to our town.’”

“An Evening With Jeff Daniels,” at Fairfield Theater’s StageOne, 70 Sanford St., Fairfield, Oct. 25 at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$32. For information: fairfieldtheatre.org; (203) 259-1036 (203) 259-1036 .

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