



## *Dan Steven's Life about Music*

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There are some stories in which joy and sorrow are so deeply entwined, there is no easy way to begin, write or finish them.

The story of London singer-song-writer Dan Steven and his music is one of those. I first met Dan just days ago. He was gravely ill with cancer. Dan was in a wheelchair at his father's house in London, surrounded by loving parents and step-parents. His songs of innocent experience filled the room. They flowed with his blend of folk, pop, street, wit, hope, insight, playfulness, anger, spirituality, belief and seriousness.

With the same ever-present love flowing around him, Dan, 25, died last week. Born in London, Dan grew up here and in Chatham. He lived in several other communities, too.

Dan's albums are *Beggars and Kings* and the soon-to-be released *Voices from God*. Find Dan's CDs at Dr. Disc Remastered in London or Chatham's Gospel Text and Sound Trax outlets. You'll hear a London indie artist who can play with the big names.

Dan wanted the focus of any story to be on his music, not his illness. Yet it was his illness, diagnosed in 1999, that led to *Beggars and Kings*, released in 2000. His parents – father Chris and step-mother Freda Steven of London and mother Jan Klooster and step-father Rick Klooster of Chatham – were able to convince Dan he could have the creative freedom he needed. They would take care of the business.

Toronto record producer Doug Romanow challenged Dan, having him sing some songs six to 10 times. Dan challenged Romanow and a crew of super players right back, making sure the music was what Dan wanted.

London is in that music. The cover of *Beggars and Kings* included a depiction of the Blackfriars bridge, a place he loved. *A Tear for Civilization* is set at the old London Mews mall. Dan's time as a London street busker musician touches that song. Another song, *Mold*, shows the guy who would sing Pearl Jam songs while playing on the streets.

There is much more to say about Dan. His mother's story – *Music Gives Hope and Joy!* – in a Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada publication, tells it better than I could.

There was his performance of *Hamlet*; the admiration and respect he gained from Romanow and other music business pros, his fabled generosity; the way he touched Newfoundland singer Suzanne Power. That list does not stop.

And there is Dan's music, two fine recordings filled with his songs.  
Dan, this one is for you.