



THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER

May 4, 2021

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John Tosco, ED, Tosco Music Organization

By Suzanne Bledsoe

John Tosco's love affair with music began in earnest when he was eight years old. Watching The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan show was his inspiration; early guitar lessons fueled his passion. When he suffered a severe trauma to his hand at the age of eleven, it was the desire to overcome the odds and play the guitar again that spurred him on to a full recovery.

A Fayetteville native, John began teaching guitar lessons when he was 14. He attended the Berklee School of Music in Boston for two years. Pursuing his dream of being a rock star, he moved to Denver and started a band, Wild River. John and his band enjoyed success playing in bars and other venues, often on the road, including The Grand Ole Opry. In 1983, with a family to support, he moved to Charlotte and began teaching guitar lessons at Community School of the Arts and Central Piedmont Community College. John missed performing, so in the mid 1980's he and his wife began hosting music "jam" parties at their home where other music lovers and their families would gather, play and sing. The parties were a hit, and eventually outgrew the living rooms and back yards where they were held. These music parties lead to the formation of Tosco Music Studio in 1998. As a not-for-profit organization, Tosco Music Studio provides music lessons for all ages, and hosts upwards of 100 events annually that celebrate and showcase musicians of all genres, connecting professional and amateur musicians to each other and the larger community of music lovers.

What started as a small gathering of music lovers in private homes has grown to large scale events in tony venues that seat upwards of 1,000 patrons. While live events continued virtually during the pandemic, John was pleased to share with us that Tosco Music is kicking off its first in person event in over a year throughout the weekend of July 9-10 at venues including Belk Theater and Spirit Square: FabFest, a celebration of the music of The Beatles—the phenomenon that sparked John's passion for music at a very young age. You can find more details and how to participate at

www.toscomusic.org where you will also see a variety of other events including the next virtual event (and perhaps last) on May 15.

Many thanks to John for a great presentation. I am excited to have Tosco Music on my radar and look forward to participating in future events!

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/545547657>

Mr. Tosco's introduction begins at approximately 14:20 minutes.