

Jeff Daniels' in a new role — singer

Actor to make Aspen singing debut at Wheeler

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January 4, 2007

Aspen, CO Colorado

ASPEN — When Jeff Daniels speaks of "clearing the William Shatner bar," he's not referring to their relative merits as actors, but as musicians.

Daniels has had a far more accomplished screen career than William Shatner. Where the latter's credits are topped by "Star Trek" and "T.J. Hooker," Daniels has had lead roles in Woody Allen's "The Purple Rose of Cairo" and last year's "The Squid and the Whale."

The two actors are also world's apart in a wholly different role — as singers.

Shatner made an ill-advised jump into singing; his version of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is the epitome of unintentional comedy.

Daniels' recent CD, "Grandfather's Hat," elicits the opposite reaction: A recognition that the actor has a decent voice, good command of the guitar, and, especially, a way with song-writing. "Grandfather's Hat" has Daniels in the role of contemporary acoustic bluesman, exploring both the comic ("Tomato Puddin'") and the serious ("Are You As Excited").

He makes his Aspen debut as a musician Friday, Jan. 5, at the Wheeler Opera House. The actor talks about his move from the big screen to singing for an audience in Friday's Aspen Times.

Jeff Daniels performs Friday at Aspen's Wheeler Opera House. (John Sobczak)



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