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Blues duo Fetner & Dikon returns from Memphis empty handed, but optimistic



(Fetner & Dikon performing in Memphis. Tom Dikon, pictured left, with Ron Fetner. Photo by Velvet Taylor, courtesy of Ron Fetner)

The Peninsula-based blues duo of **Ron Fetner** and **Tom Dikon** traveled to Memphis earlier this month to compete in the International Blues Challenge, probably the largest such competition in the nation.

They returned this week without a trophy. Fetner & Dikon played twice -- once Feb. 2 and again the next night -- but didn't score high enough with judges to advance to the competition's semi-final round of 32.

Still, they stuck around to see the Lionel Young Band and Georg Schroeter & Marc Breitfelder eventually be crowned the ultimate winners.

"We didn't get that far, but it was a cool experience to play on Beale Street," Fetner said Friday, Feb. 11. "It was really a lot of fun to do that."

The duo didn't get direct comments from judges, but Fetner said he could tell that audiences and judges enjoyed their acoustic guitar-harmonica stylings. "The only thing I know, the second night, they couldn't have been tapping their feet any louder. The audience response was just fantastic."

Fetner -- who has successfully competed in a number of national singer-songwriter competitions -- said he now has a much clearer idea of what the contest is about. If they decide to compete again, they'll know how to fine-tune their approach.

"There were some excellent bands that didn't go very far -- just unbelievably good," Fetner said. "The competition was stiff."

The sting of disappointment was eased, he said, by the fun he had visiting Memphis for the first time.

Also, local music lovers welcomed them back to Virginia warmly with a sold-out performance at the Freight Shed at the Yorktown riverfront on Thursday, Feb. 10. "That was a good thing to come home to," Fetner said. "The reaction was great, so that made us feel better."

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