



A Beautiful Night:
Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006
San Francisco, Ca, USA
by: Kristy Davis

Determination

For going on six years or so now, I've admired the music of Wakin Chau beyond all others musicians. That his music is mostly in a different language than mine is completely irrelevant to me. That I had yet to see him in concert, however, has been a point of irritation and frustration since the earliest days of my fandom. The last time I missed his show in Las Vegas in 2004, I finally had enough of missing out. I was so upset that I decided then and there, wild horses wouldn't keep me away from the next one.

Well, predictably enough, the wild horses mustered their usual assault on my plans to attend, almost before the date was finally announced. But I had waited nearly two more years for this opportunity to come around again, and so I dug my heels in, summoned all my stubborn Irish nature around me, and stood my ground against the horses. And miracle of miracles—I prevailed. When the stampede had ended, and the dust settled around me, I had my ticket. I could hardly believe it--I was going to the show!

Anticipation

It was a beautiful night in San Francisco, California, when we arrived at the doors of the Bill Graham Civic Center. The entrance to the concert hall was crowded with people, all eager to get in! Across the street, two searchlight trucks were parked. It was clearly going to be a very special night.



Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

Wakin's concert was fifth in a concert series called Papillion, and was put on by Q Productions. The seats on the floor were all part of a VIP package that included in the price of the ticket a full gourmet dinner prior to the concert. (Complete with champagne and caviar, no less!) Most of the people sitting at the round tables that filled the floor were dressed in black tie evening wear. A very high class group!



Those of us with more ordinary means all filled into the balconies. I was very excited to be able to see the concert with my friend Andrea Kurita of the [WWS](#) in Japan, whom I had not seen since the [World Party](#) in 2004. Andy had gotten us some excellent seats, just off to the right of the stage in the lower balcony level. We had a great view of everything!

On my right side was a friendly lady from Hong Kong. She was kind enough to translate bits of Wakin's jokes and conversations from stage--a novelty I'm not used to when watching concert DVD's at home! Ha-ha! But even so, I still didn't catch everything that was said, since I didn't want to pester her too much.

Opening Ceremonies

The concert actually opened in what appeared to be the continuance of ceremonies that the VIP's had enjoyed before our arrival. Two MC's, whose names I didn't catch, took a small podium in the center of the floor, and began to hand out lovely door prizes to those whom were privileged enough to be in the VIP section. Every seat in the VIP section came with a numbered ticket, and the winners were drawn at random from a glass bowl. Among the prizes were small golden statues, necklaces and other pretty jewelry pieces from Baccarat jewelers, one of



Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

the local businesses and concert sponsors. I didn't think to count the number of prizes offered at the time, but there had to be something close to like ten different pieces given away. Not bad!



A special guest in the audience was also invited to draw numbers for door prizes—none other than the mayor of San Francisco! He was greeted with applause from the audience, and told us all that his wife had decided he needed a cultural experience, and so convinced him to come to the show! (Obviously, she is a woman of exceedingly good taste!)

Once the prizes had been distributed, the MC's announced that there was one prize still left to be given. The grand prize—a lovely diamond butterfly necklace—would be awarded by none other than Wakin himself! Furthermore, he didn't need to draw names or numbers from a bowl. It would be entirely at his discretion who received the prize! At this point, even the MC's expected Wakin to appear and award the prize. But he didn't. He kept us all in suspense until the very end of the concert! Who would get the necklace? It must have been quite an exciting wait for the ladies in the VIP section, who were all in contention!



The Moment Arrives!

At last, it was time! The moment we'd all been waiting for. The MC's gave Wakin a glowing introduction (quite right, too), and we all held our breath...waiting for the show to begin! Wakin made a suspenseful entrance, being heard before being seen. When he finally appeared onstage, he was met with thunderous applause! I can't remember exactly which song he performed first, but I believe it was "I Don't Intend to Go." (My apologies in advance to all Wakin's Chinese-speaking fans who may be reading this. I don't know the Chinese titles for most of Wakin's songs, so all of them are listed here by their English translated titles.)

Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

Wakin's Stage Wardrobe

Wakin's first stage costume of the evening was a white shirt over black slacks. I couldn't see if there was any texture or patterns on the shirt—from where I was and from my photos, it didn't seem to have any special detail. He is pictured here after having received a bouquet of flowers from a fan!



He wore that for a few songs, then someone appeared on stage with a black jacket that he put on over the white shirt. The jacket looked soft, and draped like it could have been made of silk. It was really nice looking. Simple but very elegant.



He changed clothes a lot, of course. When next he disappeared and reappeared, he had exchanged his white shirt and black jacket for a shirt in one of my personal favorite colors--aqua blue!



After that he changed completely, and came back wearing a shiny black shirt, and pants that were color-blocked in black and gray, almost like fatigues. But unlike most ordinary camouflage, these pants were sparkly! Where we were sitting, we

Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

could really see the lights hit them, and they shimmered in all different colors. That was probably my favorite ensemble because it was really different, and just looked so totally cool!

He finished out the concert in a dazzling white suit. It was really striking--like a blaze of light! It seemed to be the favorite outfit of the night with many of the ladies in the concert hall, who were not at all shy about expressing their opinions! Ha-ha! The jacket front was sequined, but I couldn't be sure of the pattern. It was another very nice look on Wakin, as were all of his costumes.

All in all, his wardrobe for the whole show was a great mix of both casual and elegant styles that suit him very well!

The Play List

He sang many old favorites, which was so great for me personally, since I'd never had the privilege of hearing him in concert before. Many times that night, I had the wild sensation that I had somehow managed to walk through my TV, and into all those old concerts I spent so much time watching over the last few years! It was poetic in that way. And totally fun!



Thanks to the sweet lady sitting next to me, I can report that Wakin started the show off by asking how many people in the audience spoke Mandarin, versus Cantonese. The response was an overwhelming roar for Mandarin, while one very loud voice over our heads in the upper balcony shouted for Cantonese afterwards, making Wakin and everyone else laugh. Wakin sang mostly in Mandarin after that, but he also performed some of my very, VERY favorite Cantonese songs! Also as an added treat, he sang a few of my very, VERY favorite English songs as well!

Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

I'm not entirely sure of the order, but here is a list as well as I can remember of what he sang. I've added an M, a C or an E, to indicate the language of each:

I Don't Intend to Go (M)

Knockin' on Heaven's Door (E)

Fly Me to the Moon (E)

Ocean Deep (E, M)

Sleepless Night Alone (M)

Flowery Heart (M)

The Wind Blows On (C) {Oh, I LOVE this song!}

Somewhere Out There (C)

You Make Me at a Loss (C)

Fear of Darkness (M) {My all time favorite!}

I Truly Gave My Love to You (M)

I'm Going to Marry You Tomorrow (M)

Any Song Reminds You of Me? (M)

You Make Me Happy and Sad (M)

You All (M)

Truest Dream (M)

Love Follows Us (M)

My Dearest Baby (M)

Lonely Eyes (M)

Song of the Ferryman (M)

The Widow Village (M)

A Life of Fighting Is But a Dream (M)

I Don't Want to Be Alone (M)

Direction of the Heart (M)

Dreams of the Genius and the Idiot (C)

Friends (M)

Nothing Can Stop Me from Loving You (M)



Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

Magic Moments



I know there are some songs he also performed that I do not remember, and a few I didn't know! One of them--"Tian Mi Mi"--was not his song at all, but a tribute song to the late Taiwanese artist Teresa Teng, a very beloved singer who died tragically of an asthma attack in her hotel room while on vacation. [Many thanks to [Shereen Kang](#) for identifying for me the song title and artist in question--I couldn't remember either!] The audience was so

moved by Wakin's performance of her song, that I'm sure I was probably the only one there who'd never heard it before.

The concert was nearly three hours of sheer magic. It really was. "The Wind Blows On," is one of my very favorite of Wakin's songs, and hearing him perform that was truly a highlight for me! And I'm sorry, I know that Bob Dylan wrote "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," and that someone else recorded it once upon a time, but as far as I'm concerned, that's Wakin's song! Wow. Every



time he sings that song, I'm moved to tears! The same thing goes for "Ocean Deep" as well, which he performed here in English and in Mandarin! My apologies to Cliff Richard, but that song too, is completely Wakin's! Just breathtaking. I love to hear Wakin sing in English!

Audience Participation



Periodically in between songs, he would stop and chat with the audience. Like always, I wish I knew what he was saying! I'm sure it was funny, because everyone around was laughing, including him. Many people all around the arena called out to him all through the show. We'd hear someone scream "WAKIN!" from some dark corner of the arena, and he'd look up and laugh, or acknowledge them by saying "Yo!" and then following that up with something funny. He has such a great rapport with the audience. No matter how many people are in the arena, he has this way of making it feel so warm and friendly that you forget you're sitting in a concert hall. Just amazing how he does that!

At one point in the show, as Wakin was walking back and forth across the stage and waving at the balconies during a song, a group of people from the floor gathered at the base of the stage, just under where he was standing. He waved at them, reached towards them and shook some hands, sang to them for a little bit and then moved to another side of the stage. The group followed him, and went to stand beneath his feet again when he stopped! This went on for at least one song, if not two. Back and forth across the stage Wakin walked, and quietly the group on the floor followed him, like a very large shadow. It was so funny. Wakin of course loved it.

When he disappeared to change into his white suit, it appeared that the concert might be ending. The audience started shouting "Encore!" and chanting, "Wa-Kin!" The people in the VIP seats began clinking their cutlery so hard against their glasses that we were sure something was going to shatter! It was clear that the audience wanted more. Quite right, too! So did I. Who, after all, could ever get enough of Wakin singing, right? Definitely not this crowd, that much was certain.

When he reappeared, the concert went on another good thirty minutes. He took many requests from the audience, and we got to participate in singing "Flowery Heart," one section at a time! It was great fun!

Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

Giving Out the Grand Prize

Then he brought out a small flat box, and opened it towards the audience. It was the diamond butterfly necklace! Next, he called a pretty lady in a black evening gown from the VIP section up on stage. She gave her name, and he asked her if she could sing his songs. She said she could not, and the fans started booing! So he said, "Even if I give you the necklace, you would have a lot of pressure stepping down those stairs," and helped her off the stage. Later he spoke to her again and said, "Since you have so many diamonds all over already, you don't need it."



He probably hated not to give her the necklace once he'd pulled her on stage. Rowdy fans! Ha-ha! (Many thanks goes to [Lily Chan](#) for correcting my original translation and giving me an accurate account of this part of the show!)

The next gal he called was also in the VIP seats and very pretty, but more simply dressed in a sweater and slacks. She ran up to the stage, so excited she was giggling all the way, making Wakin and everyone laugh! We all knew then he'd found a fan--and the girl who would certainly win the necklace!

He sat down on the steps, and she sat next to him, so excited she kept giggling and hiding her face, and flopping her head against his shoulder. Wakin was falling about and laughing so hard that he couldn't talk! This of course, made all of us laugh too! Finally he started off singing, intending that she should pick up and finish the line. She literally wrenched the mike out of his hands and sang that song with all her might! She was auditioning for that necklace, and she was determined to prove she knew the words! Everyone applauded loudly when she had finished, pulling for her to win! Everyone enjoyed her performance, and when she finished he gave her the necklace! I don't think her feet touched the ground all the way back to her seat. Lucky girl! Now THAT'S one cool concert souvenir! Ha-ha!

Emil Chau Wakin in Concert, February 10, 2006

All Good Things...

After giving away the grand prize necklace, he sang a few more songs. Then all too soon, Wakin and band members joined hands across the stage and took a series of well-earned bows. The long-awaited, much anticipated show was over! In actuality it had lasted nearly three hours--perhaps more. But for me it went by so fast!

It was one of those happy little times that I think we all come to at some point in our lives, when we want to freeze time, grab hold of a special moment and never let it go. But of course, such things are not possible. All good things must come to an end, at least under heaven, anyway. All we can do is relish each minute to the fullest, and hold onto the memories in our hearts, long after the curtain falls.

Dreams Really Do Come True

Seeing Wakin live in concert has been a dream of mine for several years now. Many people may not understand why someone would go through all the trouble, time and expense to fly four hours across the country just for a concert, but that's okay with me. I know that everyone has something they would literally crawl over cut glass to own or experience. This just happened to be one of those things for me. The fulfillment of a dream, no matter how big or small it may be, is a feeling unlike anything else on the face of the earth. When something is important enough to fight for, it makes the victory all the sweeter. The San Francisco concert was so worth everything I had to do to get there, I'd readily do it all over again! Here's hoping that sometime in the near future, Wakin will come back to the USA again, and I'll have another chance to do just that. 

