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## Get Schooled by Dan Hicks at his Kollege of Musical Knowledge

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On [date] Dan Hicks will present his new musical revue *Kollege of Musical Knowledge* for one night only at the [venue] in [city].

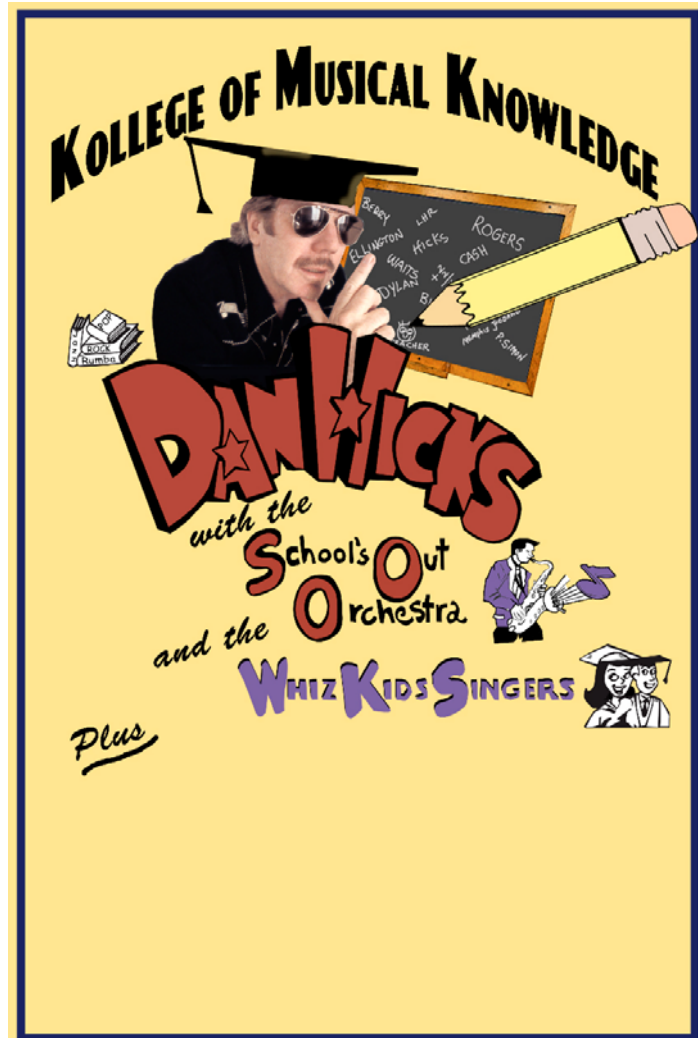
This show is the latest in a series of Dan Hicks-created musical productions that have paid homage to the Singing Cowboys, saluted the Folk Years and honored Swing Noir. Dan now pays tribute to the composers and artists he most admires including Duke Ellington, Chuck Berry, Bob Dylan, Richard Rodgers, Paul Simon and, of course, himself!

“Professor” Hicks will illuminate eager pupils to some music history as well as a variety of musical styles backed by his School's Out Orchestra and the Whiz Kids Singers. Just listen and learn!

And, don't be surprised if Dan's very own Lickettes drop by as well as some other special guests to join him on some of those signature Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks tunes.

Dan Hicks unique songwriting and blend of styles, masterful folk-swing guitar playing, and unmistakable sense of humor have made him a cultural icon, landing Hicks on the cover of Rolling Stone twice and provoking Tom Waits to say, “Dan Hicks is fly, sly, wily and dry” while Elvis Costello proclaimed him “an American treasure.”

The LA Weekly said, “Dan Hicks has plowed deep furrows through some of the most fertile pop music territory known to man, and during it all has maintained both his own distinct, light yet emphatic touch and a pace that's always kept him more than a few steps ahead of his colleagues.”



# Sacramento Press

## Dan Hicks' Class Act

by Holly S. Howard, published on September 29, 2011 at 8:34 PM

A little knowledge is good, a lot of knowledge, well, if you are a fan of "Old-Time" Rock and Roll as well as other closely related musical genres as the 200+ fans who packed Harlow's recently can attest, "The Kollege of Musical Knowledge" as taught by Dan Hicks is an essential requirement for all who have ever turned on a radio, or applied needle to vinyl, or most recently, downloaded a song or two.

"The Kollege," according to Hicks, was inspired by a 1930s to 40s radio program with the same title, a popular quiz show with music hosted by the swing-era bandleader Kay Kyser.

But instead of asking questions, "Professor Hicks" shares songs and offers tuneful history lessons reaching back into those same decades.

The curriculum, all performed by Hicks' current troupe of "Hot Licks" and "Lickettes", covers early blues, jug band music, swing, 1940s pop, cowboy songs and bebop. It continues up through the folk years with some of Hicks' songwriting contemporaries: Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Tom Waits and concludes with a few of Hicks own hits as well.

Professor Hicks has the background, experience and talent to not just teach but also, "demonstrate" an advanced class of "Music Appreciation."

Dan Hicks, born in 1947, started his musical apprenticeship as a young man growing up in Sonoma County. First influenced by his parent's love of country music, by the time he started Jr. High he had also developed a taste for jazz, blues, and big band music. He played drums in mostly swing type bands in Jr. High and high school, were Hicks also established an interest in broadcasting and had a rotating spot on a daily 15-minute local radio program called "Time Out for Teens".

Hicks entered San Francisco State College in 1959, eventually earning a degree in Broadcasting. He took up the guitar around '59, becoming part of the San Francisco folk music scene, playing and singing in local coffeehouses.

In the spring of 1965, Hicks became the drummer for an evolving San Francisco folk-rock group called "The Charlatans." Thanks to the owner of the now famous "Red Dog Saloon" in Virginia City, Nevada, "The Charlatans" also spawned what would become known as the psychedelic rock era brought to San Francisco by club's like the Avalon, the Fillmore and the Matrix owned by Gary L. Jackson and also made famous by other bands added to the bill such as Quicksilver Messenger Service, Big Brother and the Holding Co. and Jefferson Airplane.

Dan had other ideas about the kind of music he wanted to make, and began putting together an acoustic combo which included two female backup singers, who were christened "Lickettes". Billed as Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks, the group began as an opening act for The Charlatans. However, Dan soon left the Charlatans and focused his energy on the Hot Licks.

In 1969, their efforts resulted in a recording contract with Epic Records.

After some personnel changes, and a deal with Blue Thumb Records, what had then become the "classic" Hot Licks ensemble went on to produce the critically acclaimed and commercially successful albums "Where's The Money?", "Striking It Rich" and "Last Train To Hicksville". But, owing to pressures both internal and external, Dan broke up the Hot Licks in 1973, at the height of the band's popularity.

Dan then began a low-key solo career of acoustic performances. He wrote music for commercials, television, and movies, including the music for a never-released Ralph Bakshi(Fritz the Cat and Mighty Mouse; The New Adventures) animated film. That music was eventually packaged and released in 1978 by Warner Bros. Records as "It Happened One Bite", with cover artwork by Dan.

In the 1980s, he formed The Acoustic Warriors, a male combo with whom he toured. In 1994, they recorded the superb (and now out-of-print) live CD "Shootin' Straight", for the Private Music label.

Dan signed with Surfdog Records in 1998. "Beatin' The Heat", Dan's first studio opus since 1978, featured a return to the Hot Licks name and format - complete with new Lickettes - and was released in August of 2000. It garnered rave reviews, and was chosen by Time.Com as one of the Top Ten CDs of 2000. A live CD ("Alive & Lickin'") soon followed.

In September of 2003, Surfdog released a DVD/CD package featuring much of Dan's 60th Birthday Bash concert, as well as interviews with musicians of note speaking about Dan's influence.

2004 saw the release of "Selected Shorts", a dynamic and critically acclaimed studio CD, featuring contributions from such stars as Jimmy Buffett, Jim Keltner, Gibby Haynes, Van Dyke Parks and Willie Nelson.

Bruce Foreman, who performed on Dan Hicks' 2009 release, "Tangled Tales," that also includes guest appearances by the likes of David Grisman and Roy Rogers also fondly referred to Hicks as his "Musical Tour Guide." "Working with him was a great experience; [I] have always admired Dan and his music. On the twelve string solo on 'Blues,' he was giving me playing instructions in my headphones; "Play low, now some jazzy stuff...now go crazy!" ... was fun, like having an alter ego that could sing and swing." Foreman explained during a recent interview.

For those who may have missed Hicks recent appearance in Sacramento or need more of his "Hot Licks," there are two other performances scheduled nearby in the not too distant future. One is booked for October 22 in the town where essentially his long musical trip began, Virginia City, Nevada at the historic Piper Opera House, and in December Hicks will feature songs from his fabulous Christmas extravaganza album, "Crazy For Christmas" and bring the show "Holidaze In Hicksville" to the "Grass Valley, Center for the Arts."

# Dan Hicks Swings the Palm Ballroom

**The legendary Mill Valley musician entertained a big San Rafael crowd with his latest revue, the Kollege of Musical Knowledge.** By [Jesse Hamlin](#) :: March 14, 2011

The inimitable Dan Hicks presided over his Kollege of Musical Knowledge at the [Palm Ballroom](#) Saturday night, serving up a wry and swinging revue of American popular music that only Professor Hicks could've concocted. School was never this much fun.

"I'm going to be laying some facts on you tonight, so deal with it," Hicks told the big San Rafael crowd in his sly deadpan style. He dropped a fact or two about the blues – both "Tutti Frutti" and the "Batman" theme are 12-bar blues, he noted – before digging into a delightful version of the classic jug-band blues "Beedle Um Bum." Played by the crack Out of School Orchestra, it featured some of Hicks' eccentric yodel-flavored scat singing and a charming double-kazoo chorus by Roberta Donnay and Daria, the female half of the swinging Whiz Kid Singers.

It was a prime performance by an American master whose irresistible music – an original mix of jazz, folk, country music and western swing – sounds as fresh today as it did 40 years ago, when Dan Hicks & the Hot Licks became a national sensation. A crafty songwriter who composed such classic numbers as "How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away?," "Where's the Money?" and "Canned Music," Hicks gained an ardent following that included fellow musicians like Bette Midler, Tom Waits and Elvis Costello, all of whom appeared on his much-praised 2000 album, "Beatin' the Heat."

On Saturday, wearing striped trousers, a bold-colored tie emblazoned with musical notes and two-tone black and white wingtips, Hicks and company played a rich range of music that stretched from Bing Crosby to Bob Dylan, from Charlie Parker to Merle Travis, Bob Wills, Tom Waits and Paul Simon.

"It's a good thing Dylan changed his name," Hicks observed. "Otherwise we'd have a generation of kids with the first name of Zimmerman." After the crowd stopped laughing, he launched into a popping version of Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues," which Professor Hicks informed his students was based on the Woody Guthrie-Pete Seeger song "Taking It Easy."

Hicks sprinkled such fascinating factoids throughout the pleasing 90-minute performance, which included two of his classic originals, "I Scare Myself" and "I Feel Like Singin'." They fall into the folk-swing genre that the songwriter modestly noted "was invented by a San Francisco State graduate named Dan Hicks."

The flamenco-flavored "I Scare Myself," colored with the snapping sound of castanets, featured a bracing flute solo by Louis Aissen, followed by Paul Robinson's fiery electric guitar solo. Hicks pretended to play along with it in a hilarious bit satirizing rock guitar heroes. He ran his fingers over the back of his guitar and feigned flicking the strings with his tongue.

The crowd went crazy for "I Feel Like Singin'," which danced in a brisk four-to-the-bar groove. Hicks swapped swinging call-and-response phrases with the Whiz Kids (Tim Eschliman, Jimmy Dillon, Donnay and Daria), did some comic rubber-legged dance moves and seasoned his scat solo with a Louis Armstrong growl.

Earlier, during an interview, Hicks talked about finding fresh ways to sing his classic songs.

"I always try to approach them differently," said Hicks, a jazz-loving improviser who began his career as a drummer before focusing on his singing, songwriting and guitar playing (he was the drummer in the seminal San Francisco rock band The Charlatans).

"I try to entertain myself, to see what I can do, and to see if I've gotten any better. Sometimes I'll sing something and say, 'I never sang that song that way before.' I feel like I've had some growth."

An artist as well as a musician, Hicks designed the little blue Kollege of Musical Knowledge diplomas he handed out Saturday night. Everybody got one, whether or not they remembered that Charlie Parker's "Ornithology" was based on the chords of "How High the Moon," or that Bing Crosby and Karen Carpenter were both drummers before they became singers. They won't forget the A-plus performance, which inspired a rousing standing ovation.