

Mihali, the frontman of Vermont-based jam outfit Twiddle, took the stage as a one-man band at Hodi's Half Note Saturday. With just a guitar and a looping mechanism, he created dense soundscapes that included acoustic rhythms, bass, beatboxing, electric lead parts and occasionally guitar-slapping percussion.

The loop-heavy approach invites comparisons to the likes of Keller Williams and Hawaii-bred reggae artist Mike Love. Most songs evolved out of acoustic rhythm parts, which Mihali would loop and then supplement with various augmentations. The layers would fade in and out, so that the sound vacillated between a straightforward singer-songwriter feel and a fuller, more complex one.

Most of the “electric” leads were crisp and dense—as one might expect, many would have fit well on a Twiddle record. Indeed, there was no shortage of Twiddle songs on the setlist.

“Syncopated Healing” developed around a funky bass line and an ascending acoustic chord progression, but featured a soaring electric solo with rhythmic trills.

“The Fantastic Tale of Ricky Snickle,” which Mihali said he had never played solo before, fit well in the one-man band context. Mihali became a melody-conscious storyteller weaving the tale of the washed-up—or perhaps redeemed—gangster.

An aborted “Divided Sky” quote—a nod to Vermont’s jam godfathers—bled into a pared-down rendition of “Apples.” Midway through the tune, a vocal crescendo led to a soft acoustic interlude. An extended bridge section departed significantly from the original song.

Mihali obliged a request from the crowd with a cover of The Rolling Stones’ “Wild Horses.” He accelerated the song’s tempo, opted for a denser rhythm part, and replaced Mick Jagger’s jaded howl with more comfortable, reggae-tinged vocals that remained true to the mournful tone of the original song.

Sean Kelly of Colorado folk band The Samples joined Mihali on a cover of “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes” by Crosby, Stills and Nash. His gravelly tenor vocals settled into an inviting space, and his acoustic guitar nestled under Mihali’s “electric.” The latter instrument contributed staccato fills, then a muted riff, then a distorted, chordal rhythm part. The obvious mutual respect between the two musicians (each praised the other repeatedly) fostered daring and unique interplay.

Mihali’s versatility and musicianship took the music to realms a young Dylan never could have imagined a man could reach with six strings, a sound hole and some digital magic.