

By Scott Tady

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PITTSBURGH - Graham Nash got booed by a concert crowd Tuesday in Cincinnati.

It didn't bother him.

"They're entitled to boo," Nash said. "What I said to them was 'I don't mind. At least you're in the game. At least you have a view you want to express. At least you're not acting like sheep.'"

The booing came after Nash debuted a song, "Almost Gone," he had finished writing the day before about Bradley Manning, the U.S. soldier arrested in Iraq and facing charges of aiding the enemy for supplying restricted material to the WikiLeaks website.

Nash claims Manning is being tortured in prison, including the use of sleep deprivation tactics, while awaiting trial.

"Isn't it innocent until proven guilty?" Nash said in a Wednesday phone interview, his affable British voice growing agitated. "Isn't that one of the laws in this country?"

Nash said he intends to sing the song again Friday when he and fellow legend and musical partner David Crosby perform in a sold-out show at the Carnegie Library Music Hall in Munhall.

In terms of artistic expression, Nash and Crosby haven't mellowed; still determined to sing what's on their mind, as they first did as two-thirds of Crosby, Stills & Nash - or as half of

Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young - groups that wrote anti-war anthems and other socially conscience songs embraced by the Woodstock-era counter-culture.

Crosby and Nash periodically tour and record together as a subset.

"One of the joys of working with David is he's fearless," Nash said, adding that Crosby encouraged Nash to sing "Almost Gone" in Cincinnati. "He had never heard it before, but said 'If it means that much to you, then do it.'"

The duo is playing both acoustic and plugged-in songs on this tour, backed by a band featuring Crosby's son, James Raymond, on keyboards; bassist Kevin McCormick (Jackson Browne's band); guitarist Dean Parks (Steely Dan) and drummer Steve DiStanislao.

They've been changing their set lists on the fly, said Nash, expressing empathy with their guitar technicians, who must scramble to make sure everyone has the proper instrument.

"The other day I told David, 'You know, in 43 years we haven't done 'Cowboy Movie' live,'" Nash said, referring to a song on Crosby's 1971 solo debut.

So they played it.

Nash suggested they launch the Cincinnati show with "Eight Miles High," a hit penned by Crosby in his pre-CS&N days with the Byrds.

The crowd loved that.

"It's a fabulous freedom to have," Nash said of the duo's spontaneity.

Recent shows have included CS&N and CSN&Y hits like "Teach Your Children," "Wasted on the Way," "Almost Cut My Hair," "Wooden Ships," "Deja Vu," "Marrakesh Express," "Just a Song Before I Go" and "Long Time Gone".

They've also been singing "Our House," an upbeat 1970 CSN&Y hit about domestic bliss, penned by Nash, who describes it as "an insanely simple song," which he wrote after an afternoon of lunch and antiquing with his then-girlfriend, Joni Mitchell.

A U.S. citizen since 1978, who now lives in Kauai, Hawaii, Nash was raised in England, where he rose to musical fame with the British Invasion band the Hollies.

Nash's native country honored him last year, with the Queen of England appointing him Officer of the Order of the British Empire, recognizing both his musical and charitable contributions.

That doesn't mean Nash intended to witness Friday's pre-dawn live TV coverage of the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

"I won't get up early to watch it," Nash said. "Though, I might watch if I'm still up writing, which is possible these days."