

local news

King of the Strings Brings Unique Show to The Villages

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Senior Writer

When you see someone holding a violin, you probably think of classical, orchestral or chamber music.

But United Kingdom star Gary Lovini brings something completely different to his performances with the instrument — like using a light-up lightsaber laser bow to play the violin during his “Star Wars” medley.

Lovini became a household name in Great Britain at age 17, when he won a TV talent show called “New Faces” in 1986.

Great Britain had only four TV channels at the time, which led Lovini to have an audience of about 15 million viewers.

“I won this TV talent show as a violinist, and at the time, there was nobody doing anything remotely like that — bringing fun to the instrument,” Lovini said.

The show kicked off his career, leading him to perform in the Royal Variety Performance for Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret.

Later in life, he and his wife, Emma, had the opportunity to meet the queen again while attending a party at Buckingham Palace for the 125th anniversary of the Grand Order of Water Rats, an exclusive British entertainment fraternity of which Gary is a member.

“We had drinks with the queen and an evening at the Buckingham Palace, which was absolutely amazing,” Gary said. “We actually spoke with the queen and met her,” Emma said. “I curtsied and Gary shook her hand, and we had a chat with her.”

Gary also has had the chance to work with stars like Neil Sedaka and Jack Jones.

He’s had a cup of tea with Dionne Warwick in her dressing room and has performed on major cruise lines.

In the 2000s, Gary performed as a guest artist in the Mickey Finn Show four times at Savannah Center.

Gary said his trips to The Villages led him to fall in love with America and



Submitted photo

United Kingdom musician Gary Lovini will bring his headlining violin spectacular to the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center at 7 p.m. on Aug. 25.

ultimately move here — he and his family currently reside in Celebration.

He said he likes the atmosphere and feel-good factor in The Villages.

“From what I remember, the audiences in The Villages were the greatest audiences in show business,” Gary said. “Their numbers and reaction was so great. Coming from Great Britain, they’re not as open. The British are more reserved.”

Gary, Emma and their children have been enjoying life in Celebration for three years.

“As a child growing up in England, it was a dream to go to Disney,” Gary said. “And now here we are, living in Celebration, which was designed by Walt Disney himself. We’re literally living the American dream right here in Florida.”

Gary also works with Disney Cruise Line and always includes Disney songs in his show, including hits from “The Lion King” and “Beauty and the Beast.”

The show is highly recommended for Disney lovers, but Gary said there is something for everyone and every age in the show.

“I’m not a classical artist, I’m a headliner showman,” Gary said. “I bring violin music to everybody.”

His show will include classical music, pop music, ballads, country music, Irish music and more. It is an energetic and electrifying performance accompanied by an

eight-piece band and visual technology, he said.

“I love performing and bringing violin to people who are a bit skeptical of the instrument,” Gary said. “Everyone always comes up to me afterward and says, ‘Oh my God, I wasn’t expecting to see anything like that.’”

Gary’s show will be performed at 7 p.m. Aug. 25 at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. Tickets, which went on sale today, are available online at thevillagesentertainment.com or at any Villages Box Office location for \$20 to \$45.

“We’re here now to bring Gary’s headliner show to America,” Emma said. “He’s well known in show business in England, but we want to promote his energetic spectacular violin show to American audiences.”

Kristen Fiore is a senior writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5270, or kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com.



Airborne At Camp Villages

Santiago Fernandez, 9, of Miami, takes a shot during Camp Villages Outdoor Games: Basketball on Tuesday at Laurel Manor Recreation Center.

Erin Williams, Daily Sun



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