

Season of Star Power Starts at The Sharon

NEXT WEEK'S FIRST SHOW OPENS BIG-TIME SCHEDULE



Submitted photos

Country music artist Trace Adkins is coming to The Sharon for the first time this season.



"Reza: Edge of Illusion" will perform Aug. 23 in the first show of The Sharon's new season.



Flamenco Vivo is part of the new season's international subscription offerings at The Sharon.



Louie Anderson will bring his brand of comedy to The Sharon for the first time this season.



By KRISTEN FIORE | Daily Sun Senior Writer

At just under 5 years old, the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center has put itself on the map of high-end entertainment venues in Florida and has piqued the interest of patrons and performers alike. After a summer hiatus of less than two months, The Sharon will reopen its doors Aug. 23 for the first show of the season, "Reza: Edge of Illusion." And "Reza" is just the beginning. From here on out, patrons can look forward to months of big-name acts, new subscription options, intimate concerts in the venue's lobby-lounge and other upgrades. The goal is to continue bringing in the highest caliber of art possible to The Villages, according to Elizabeth Constant, booking coordinator at



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The Sharon.

"Additionally, we wanted to bring back some favorites that sell out quickly here in The Villages," Constant said. "That way others have an opportunity to see them, or if you went in past seasons, you can relive the excitement."

Some of the returning big names for the 2019-20 season include the Righteous Brothers, coming in January, and Kansas, coming in February.

New this season are acts like country singer Trace Adkins, ventriloquist Terry Fator and comedian Louie Anderson.

Constant said she most looks forward to Complexions, a modern, ballet-inspired dance company that will perform "Star Dust: from Bach to David Bowie" in November.

"They are a rare company that features men on pointy shoes," Constant said. "I cannot wait to host their show. If you're a fan of Bowie, they elevate his songs to the highest degree. They don't shy away from the glitter on the face and the '80s Spandex. They have toured this program for at least two years and we are one of their last stops to offer this choreography, so catch it now or forever miss out."

Constant urges patrons to keep an eye on thesharon.com and like the venue on Facebook to stay up to date.

"Though we announced many titles in May, I have at least 50 new titles to continue to trickle out as the season progresses," she said.

One of the main goals for the season was to curate a Broadway subscription package, something patrons have been asking for for a long time, according to The Sharon's artistic director, Whitney Morse.

"I think the Broadway shows we have coming in are a very nice combination," Morse said. "We have a straight-up comedy ('The Play that Goes Wrong'), a lovely jukebox musical ('Beautiful: The Carole King Musical') and a moving new musical about veterans ('Bandstand'). There is a little something for everyone."

HOW TO BUY TICKETS

Online: thevillagesentertainment.com

On the Phone:
352-753-3229

In Person: Box Offices are located on all three town squares as well as at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center and Savannah Center.

UPCOMING SHOWS AT THE SHARON

Reza: Edge of Illusion:
\$20-\$48
7 p.m. Aug. 23

Around the World in 80 Minutes — Lobby Lounge Cabaret starring Heather Kopp:
\$25
7 p.m. Aug. 29

The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra Pops Concert:
\$25-\$65
7 p.m. Sept. 1

Don't Tell Nonnie:
\$20
7:30 p.m. Sept. 9

Ballroom with a Twist:
\$20-\$68
3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Oct. 2

Julie Fowlis:
\$20-\$48
7 p.m. Oct. 14

Another new subscription this season is the National Geographic Subscription, a series of interactive lectures on topics from underwater photography to dinosaurs.

Returning subscriptions include ones to The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra's



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Complexions is a modern, ballet-inspired dance company that will perform "Star Dust: from Bach to David Bowie" in November.



"Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" is a jukebox musical that is part of the new Broadway subscription package.



Ventriloquist Terry Fator is a new act coming to The Sharon this season.

concerts and the International Subscription, a package in which patrons get to choose from a list of nine multicultural acts. Each of the international shows comes with a drink specially created in the theme of the show.

"The best part about

subscriptions (other than the price break) is that you get to choose your seats first before individual buyers," Constant said.

To subscribe or learn more about the subscriptions, visit

thevillagesentertainment.com or any Villages Box Office location.

Additionally, the venue will continue holding cabaret-style events in the lobby-lounge area

to give patrons a more intimate view of The Sharon.

"We wanted to fill the void that Church on the Square used to offer," Constant said. "We wanted to keep the doors open to our venue even when big national tours weren't scheduled to come through Florida."

Morse's "Don't Tell Nonnie" open-mic event will continue to take place in the lobby-lounge every few months, as well as The Sharon's cabaret series, a set of shows featuring local entertainers that was introduced last season.

"It's a unique live space and it's always a laid-back evening with drinks and lounging," Constant said.

On the technical end, box office staff have been getting use out of The Villages Entertainment's new online ticketing system, an upgrade to thevillagesentertainment.com and other elements of the box office that makes searching for shows and purchasing tickets a more patron-friendly and interactive experience.

The box office will continue to make upgrades throughout the season.

The latest installment is new state-of-the-art microphones at every box office window.

The microphones, which are the same kind that NASA uses, have a loop system for the hard of hearing.

As the 2019-20 entertainment season quickly approaches, Morse offers thanks to the patrons of The Sharon.

"We have the best patrons in the world," she said. "I know that's true, because artists say it all the time. Our patrons are always so excited to see the acts we bring in, and that energy is so palpable that the performers can feel it from the stage. If it weren't for the patrons, we wouldn't have The Sharon at all."



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