

arts & culture



Sophia Lucente | Daily Sun

Terri Clark, a Canadian country music singer, performs Friday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Terri Clark Brings Audience to Golden Era of Country

The “Girls Lie Too” singer stopped at The Sharon while touring throughout the United States.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND
Daily Sun Senior Writer

There was a country music takeover Friday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Country music fans came from far and wide to see Terri Clark, the only Canadian woman currently with a Grand Ole Opry membership as well as a Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame inductee and a Canadian Music Hall of Fame inductee. The multi-platinum and multi-Juno-award-winning artist is a favorite from the 1990s golden era of country music, back when the genre was dominated by the likes of Shania Twain, Trisha Yearwood, Martina McBride, Faith Hill and The Chicks.

“Seems like it was yesterday,” Clark said. “The ‘90s were full of great music — there was so much going on.”

Dressed in jeans, brown leather, a cowboy hat and boots, Clark brought with her the kind of country glamour that was ubiquitous in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

She switched guitars more than most artists change costumes, and she charmed the audience with jokes about nostalgia for the 1990s, her Reba McEntire impression and stories about the making of her latest album, “Terri Clark: Take Two.”

“It’s a fresh take on some old songs by some of the biggest names in country music today,” she said.

During the concert, Clark performed the version of “If I Were You” that she recorded with Kelly Clarkson, which amps up the slow love song to a powerful ballad better suited to Clarkson’s vocals.

Next year marks 30 years of performing and touring for

Clark. In honor of her time as a “road dog,” she covered “The Highway” by Holly Williams, Hank Williams’ granddaughter.

Clark saved her best and biggest hits for last. In addition to “I Wanna Do It All,” she sang the 2004 No. 1 hit “Girls Lie Too,” “Better Things To Do,” “Footloose” and ended with fan favorite “Poor, Poor Pitiful Me.”

Many in the audience traveled from quite a distance to see Clark live in concert. David Pierce and his wife, Laura Black-Pierce, came from Tallahassee.

Despite being a longtime fan, it was Pierce’s first time seeing Clark live — and not for lack of trying.

“I have tried to see Terri Clark for years,” Pierce said. “This is the third time I’ve tried to see her.”

Pierce first tried to see Clark in 1997, when she opened for Reba McEntire and Brooks and Dunn in Knoxville, Tennessee. Running late to the theater, he missed her by five minutes.

A few years later, Pierce and his sister were going to see Clark in Atlanta. She was supposed to perform with Rascal Flatts for New Year’s Eve but canceled that night.

“When I found out she was going to be here tonight, I said, ‘Oh, we are going. I’m not missing her again,’” Pierce said.

LeeAnne Fernandez came from Palm Harbor and her friend, Kat Miller, from Crystal River to catch the show. Both are longtime fans.

Many years ago, Fernandez got a photo with Clark at a Tampa nightclub. She still has the photo, which Clark signed after the concert. Fernandez also managed to secure a drumstick and guitar pick from backstage.

“She looks the same and acts the same from what I remember 20 years ago,” Fernandez said. “I’d come again in a heartbeat. I’d come to see her here again tomorrow if she were playing.”

The Sharon’s Talent Night Puts a New Spotlight on Community

Significant Productions’ recent talent show reminds patrons why it’s important to support the local theater.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND
Daily Sun Senior Writer

There’s a show going on nearly every week at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center, but it’s not every day the cast is all crew.

The Sharon’s crew recently staged a musical takeover in “Significant Talent,” a special addition to the Lobby Lounge Cabaret Series. Featuring a number of familiar faces, such as Mark Kirschenbaum and Alec Speers, as well as a few most patrons don’t often get to see, the talent show allowed Significant Production’s crew to shine.

“Significant Productions has a focus on art, artists and audience,” said Madi Carr, production coordinator and returning Lobby Lounge Cabaret performer. “Our artists not only include touring and contract professionals but also include significant talent, which you will see here tonight.”

Founded by Whitney Morse, artistic director for Significant Productions and granddaughter of The Sharon’s namesake, and executive director Jason Goedken, Significant Productions is the 501(c)(3) organization that oversees The Sharon and The Studio Theatre Tierra Del Sol.

In addition to The Sharon and The Studio’s regular seasons, the not-for-profit theater production company also hosts its Lobby Lounge Cabaret Series, in which local singers and in-house entertainers perform in The Sharon’s historic lobby.

“I personally feel really blessed to work for a company that wants to highlight and showcase our talents as not only employees but as artists,” Carr said.

“Significant Talent” looked a lot like SigPro’s other cabaret-style lobby shows, like The Sharon’s nine-year anniversary event, “Don’t Tell Nonnie” open mic nights, “The Great American Songbook” or “Tenor in Love.” Performers introduced themselves to the audience and sang covers of popular musical theater songs that related to their own lives in some way.

Speers, house manager,



Photos by Sophia Lucente | Daily Sun

Alec Speers, house manager for Significant Productions at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center, sings in the Significant Talent Lobby Lounge Cabaret show.



Madi Carr, production coordinator at The Sharon, performs in the Significant Talent show Aug. 19.

and Kirschenbaum, Studio production manager, kicked off the event with a rendition of “Agony” from “Into the Woods.” They were followed by an interchanging mix of singers both old and new, including associate lighting supervisor Dio Raquel Jr., who spends most of his time up in The Sharon’s rafters.

Born in Honolulu, Raquel comes to The Villages by way of Las Vegas. He recently earned a bachelor’s degree in theater studies and joined the SigPro team. To pay homage to all the new changes, he sang “Moving Too Fast” from “The Last Five Years.”

“This song really represents my time, not just since I was literally 12, but also coming to SigPro, where I experience so

much gratitude and so much passion in the arts,” he said.

Lighting supervisor Allison Southgate is no stranger to a stage, but she’s usually not performing on them.

Her clear, powerful voice was a surprise to many in the crowd, who whispered their appreciation to one another every time she stepped up to the mic.

The performance that received the most praise was Southgate’s rendition of “Memory” from “Cats.”

“Back when I was in the fourth grade, I sang this song for my school talent show, and my mom has always been, ‘Ally, you need to sing that song again,’” Southgate said. “I’m singing it again for her.”

Marketing assistant Jessica Nix also delivered a standout performance. By day, Nix monitors SigPro’s social media accounts. But by night, she is “Birdie,” playing shows around The Villages and on Anna Maria Island with her trusty ukulele, named Christine.

As “Birdie,” Nix delighted the crowd with Queen’s “Somebody to Love.” Then, she and Christine returned with a musical montage featuring songs like George Michael’s “Faith,” “Time After Time,” “Red Red Wine,” “Shout,” “We Are Young” and “Don’t You Want Me.”

The cabaret was as much about encouraging patrons to donate to the theater as it was about showcasing talent.

SigPro recently ended its first fundraising campaign, “Bringing the Best,” which made more than 50% of its \$25,000 goal. Proceeds from the campaign will go toward facility updates at The Sharon, but with the Florida legislature cutting more than \$32 million in arts and culture grants from next year’s budget, it’s not enough.

Ticket sales account for only 65% of The Sharon’s annual operating budget, according to director of operations Jon Cronin. The 35% gap is roughly equal to SigPro’s people costs, and it’s a big number.

“We’re trying to close that gap every single year,” Cronin said. “If you decide to join us as a donor, you’re paying for all of these people to be here. To have their jobs, be passionate about the arts and continue to make the arts a vital part of where you live.”

For those interested in donating, go to significant productions.org or call 352-668-9502.

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