## arts & culture



Chris Barron, center, lead singer of Spin Doctors, performs Sunday at The Tracy Performing Arts Center in Middleton.

## Spin Doctors Takes Audience to Rock 'N' Roll Heaven

**Concertgoers were treated** to a night of '90s nostalgia at The Tracy Performing Arts Center.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND Daily Sun Senior Writer

Spin Doctors, a band once synonymous with the '90s alternative rock scene, earned a standing ovation Sunday

night at The Tracy. Rock fans came to The Tracy Performing Arts Center from far and wide to catch the group's concert, which was

the first of its kind. "Spin Doctors is the first national touring act performing in our brand-new theater space, The Tracy Performing Arts Center, said Sarah Higby, marketing manager for The Villages Entertainment. "We are happy to have them as our grand

opening act for The Tracy." It's been more than 30 years since Spin Doctors first debuted, but the New York City-bred band is still making music, still riding the bus and still shaking the house down with hits like "Two Princes" and "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong." The band currently consists of three original members - lead vocalist Chris Barron, guitarist Eric Schenkman and drummer Aaron Comess — as well as a newcomer, bassist Jack Daley.

Outside of Spin Doctors, the band members have embarked on their fair share of solo projects, such as Comess' 2018 album "Sculptures," but they also have a new album, "Face Full of Cake," scheduled for release in early 2025.

At The Tracy, Spin Doctors focused on the hits. In addition to "Two Princes" and "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong," the band played songs from its successful 1991 debut album, "Pocket Full of Kryptonite," as well as "If the River Was Whiskey" and "Nice Talking to Me."

From beginning to end, the concert was a nostalgic ride, with Barron serving as the driver. He took the opportunity to explain the origins behind many of the band's songs, especially those with controversial lyrics that may not have aged well. One of those was "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong," which has been criticized for its harshness toward the woman in the song.

Many people think the song is about an ex-girlfriend or ex-wife, Barron said, but it's not. The song is about his father's late ex-wife.

**B**arron said in the grand spectrum of human relationships, stepmothers have a hard job. He said he knows many wonderful stepmothers, including his father's new wife as well as his

Like many acts touring at this time, the upcoming election seems to be on the band's mind. Throughout the show, Barron touched on several social issues, using songs like "Boom Box" as a segue to discussing women's rights and emphasizing the need for kindness and understanding in the world today. He also encouraged people to vote in the upcoming election.

"It doesn't matter where we're from, doesn't matter what color we are, doesn't matter who we love," Barron said. "We are called upon to love one another, and that's the only real truth that we need to go on. I hope you guys walk out of here with that message in your hearts."

The message resonated with many in the crowd, many of whom cheered and raised their fists in the air as a sign of support.

After the concert, some audience members lingered inside The Tracy to discuss the show and explore the venue a little more. Jeff and Mary DiBuono, a Leesburg couple, were two such individuals. It was their first time visiting the theater.

"This is just spectacular," Jeff said. "The size, the appearance, the music, the acoustics, the way the seats are set up. I could just go on."

The DiBuonos are excited about The Tracy's lineup of upcoming shows and are planning to return in November. They currently have their eyes set on The 5th Dimension concert Nov. 9.

"We're going to keep coming," Jeff said. "We feel comfortable here, we feel safe here. There's a great security presence, and it's a wellmanaged facility."

Dana and Curt Corkern, of the Village of Cason Hammock, attended the concert with friends Stacey and Chris Mello, of the Village of St. Catherine.

The group remembers Spin Doctors from the late 1980s, particularly the band's songs 'Jimmy Olson's Blues," "Two Princes" and "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong." Despite being more casual fans, they still greatly enjoyed the concert.

"The drummer and the guitarist were amazing,' Dana said. "The singer was fantastic, and he has a great

Dana is a big hard rock fan and is excited about all of the harder rock options coming to The Tracy. She's disappointed she won't be able to catch The Devon Allman Project at 7 p.m. Saturday, but said her fingers are crossed for the band Relic.

"My favorite band is Relic," she said. "That would be awesome if they came here."

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## **VPO Concert Celebrates** Heritage Through Music

The annual "American Italian Celebration" will take place 7 p.m. Tuesday at The Sharon.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra always has been a bastion of heritage and culture, starting with its founders. Both maestro Pasquale

Valerio and the late Oscar Feliu immigrated to the United States. It's often said that Feliu, the "father of music in The Villages," came to America from Chile with a guitar on his back and a song in his heart. He worked in the entertainment and restaurant industry, eventually coming to the community and co-founding the VPO.

Valerio, the co-founder, has a similar story. "I was born and raised in Naples," Valerio said. "Every year in the month of October, we celebrate Italian and American music in concert. It's now the 20th year from the day we started this project.'

The "American Italian ▲ Celebration" concert takes place Tuesday, the day after Columbus Day and on the last day of National Hispanic Heritage Month, at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. It features a mixed program of classic American songs and famous Italian operas, such as selections from "West Side Story," "Les Misérables," "The Barber of Seville," "The Godfather," Italian folk songs, Neapolitan songs and more. Guest vocalists Mark Antonio de Villiers, Sean Stork and Samantha Barnes Daniel will join the VPO on stage, and the Italian American Club will be in attendance.

"It will be a great joy for me to have the Italian American Club at this concert," Valerio said. "It is important to have a connection with all the Italians in America and thus celebrate the traditions and history of the Italians who have come to America since the 1800s.'

In the spirit of collaboration, Valerio allowed each of the three guest vocalists to prepare a list of Italian and American songs within their repertoire, and he chose the ones that best fit the theme.

Although Daniel is, in her



Sean Stork sings during The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra's Opera Gala Concert at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. He will appear again during the annual "American Italian Celebration" at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

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**SAMANTHA BARNES** 

guest vocalist

own words, "English through and through," the soprano has a great appreciation for Italian and Italian American music. Most opera singers do, she said.

"The very first language you learn to sing in after English is Italian," Daniel said. "It's the purest language in terms of tone.

Daniel is an active soloist and chamber musician, performing throughout Central Florida. Some of Daniel's most recent stage credits include the mother in "Hansel & Gretel" and Catherine of Aragon in Opera Orlando and The Helena Collective's award-winning Orlando Fringe Festival debut, "6 of VIII." Patrons may recognize her from previous performances in the "American Italian Celebration."

"It's an interesting combination of music," Daniel said.

"There's a little bit of everything, from popular artists like Josh Groban and Sarah Brightman, musical theater, operas and operettas."

Out of all the songs Daniel selected to perform in the concert, she's most looking forward to singing "Io Son L'umile Ancella" from the opera "Adriana Lecouvreur." It's one her favorite arias, but she doesn't get to perform it often.

"It's not a good audition song because it doesn't go very high and it doesn't show off a soprano's upper range very well," she said. "But as a performer, I love it - it's a prayer to music."

Lyric baritone Stork and tenor Villiers are no strangers to The Sharon's stage either. Both vocalists have performed in the VPO's 'Celebrate American Pops'' and "Holiday Celebration" concerts.

Villiers is best known for captivating audiences with his powerful, emotive performances and has graced many renowned Florida stages, such as the Florida Grand Opera, Palm Beach Opera and Chautauqua Opera Company.

Referred to as a "power house," Stork is often praised for his mastery of languages and effortless vocal production. Keith Lay, composer of the "Starboy" opera, said he was "as familiar with singing from the Great American Songbook as he is with the great opera canon."

All three vocalists return to perform in "American Italian Celebration" 7 p.m. Tuesday at The Sharon. Tickets are \$40 and up. Go to the villages entertainment.

