

Brenda Lee Cottrell & The Legends by Joan Ritchie



It was an evening that sparked magical memories as Brenda Lee Cottrell & the Legends performed in The Mae Wilson Theatre on Saturday, October 26th. Brenda Lee Cottrell sang the songs of Patsy Cline, Brenda Lee and Loretta Lynn as if the legendary ladies themselves were performing; all a person needed to do was close their eyes and be transported back in time. As well, Cottrell fashionably changed costumes to better represent each legendary lady.

Moose Jaw's very own well-loved legendary steel-guitar player, Tex Emery made a guest appearance and played a few favourites with Cottrell and the band. His quick wit and fine tuning added a special dimension to the concert.

The audience made it hard for Cottrell & The Legends to exit the stage with all the standing ovations and applause for encores; the band accommodated. The evening proved to be one to remember.

Brenda Lee Cottrell & The Legends



Cottrell performs as Loretta Lynn singing an all-time favourite “Coal Miner’s Daughter.”

A 60s Walk Down Memory Lane

by Joan Ritchie

Brenda Lee Cottrell & the Legends are bringing a new show to Moose Jaw: A 60's Walk Down Memory Lane will feature the memorable music of a few of the era's legendary ladies and will take place at the Mae Wilson theatre on September 27th. From seniors to teenagers, the show will be unforgettable! Cottrell doesn't just bring the music; she weaves a trail of nostalgia through the hearts and minds of those that remember. And for the rest of the crowd, it's a chance to get in on an era they may not be familiar with.

"It gets people into the 60s music," says Cottrell. "It's not a genre but a focus on the era. It brings others in who are not just lovers of country music."

The music and culture of the 60s was defined significantly by a huge shift in the socio-cultural conditions of the day. "It was a decade of extremes, of transformational change and bizarre contrasts: flower children and assassins, idealism and alienation, rebellion and backlash. For many in the massive post-World War II baby boom generation, it was both the best of times and the worst of times."

As for the music of the legendary ladies Cottrell will be singing, most were in the prime of their careers and their music reflects a purer more innocent time. It's emotional music that ranges from ecstatic highs to breaking heartache. Cottrell's repertoire will include hits by Brenda Lee, Leslie Gore, Connie Francis, Loretta Lynn, Petula Clark, and of course, Patsy Cline. If you haven't already heard Cottrell sing Patsy Cline, make sure you take this opportunity to be there!

Brenda Lee was the top-charting female vocalist of the 1960s. She sang rockabilly, pop and country music, and had 47 US chart hits during the 1960s; ranked fourth in that decade surpassed only by Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Ray Charles. During the same era, Petula Clark was hot on the scene; her hit "Downtown" was the first of 15 consecutive Top 40 hits Clark achieved in the US. Due



(l-r) Don Young - drums / backup vocals; Ron Pettigrew - bass guitar / backup vocals; Brenda Lee Cottrell; Brian Davis - lead guitar / backup vocals; Otis Young - keyboard

to the British Invasion and changing trends in the early and mid-1960s, Connie Francis had her final top-10 hit, "Vacation," in 1962. A number of Francis' singles continued to reach the top 40 in the U.S. She was on the Hot 100 through the mid-1960s, with her last top 40 entry being 1964's "Be Anything (but Be Mine)". Loretta Lynn, a legend in country music is well known for her honky tonk style. As for Lesley Gore, her first and most popular hit, 1963's "It's

my Party," remains her signature tune to date. Her voice represents the youthful outlook of the day. She recorded other hits throughout the 60s including "Look of Love," "Maybe I Know" and "You Don't Own Me." As for the music of Patsy Cline, she needs no introduction.

"Why do we do it?" Cottrell says, "I have to sing music that moves me; I can interpret it and share it!" And for that, she leaves her heart on the stage with every performance. "It's a magical music," she says.

As for the venue, Cottrell says that the Mae Wilson theatre is the perfect venue for the concert. "We love the Mae Wilson so much; the vintage venue represents the era so well. It oozes charm and the decade we are taking them back to."

"It's probably the best live performance theatre in the province; it's a jewel!"

Over the summer, Cottrell and her husband/business manager Brian did a nine location tour throughout the province to promote the show. "We were very well received," says Cottrell. "We have even been getting some interest in the Alberta market and now are booking into 2015."

Cottrell has been performing with her band the Legends. They are continually fine-tuning their concerts and have a new lead guitar player who also does backup vocals, Brian Davis. On bass guitar and backup vocals, Ron Pettigrew; Otis Young on keyboard and Don Young on drums and backup vocals.

The Memorable Music of the 60s Legendary Ladies performed by Brenda Lee Cottrell and the Legends will be performed at the Mae Wilson theatre on Saturday, September 27th at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 available at the Cultural Centre Box Office: 306.693.4700 or www.moosejawculture.com.

* <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2010/03/12/the-1960s-a-decade-of-change-for-women>

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2

Let's get nostalgic...

by Joan Ritchie

A unique blend of seasoned musicians from Regina, **Brenda Lee & the Legends** will be performing some of the most heartfelt songs of the 50s and 60s at the Mae Wilson Theatre on Saturday, October 26th at 7pm. With a sultry, emotionally expressive voice reminiscent of Patsy Cline, Brenda Lee Cottrell will sing the memorable music of legendary ladies such as Brenda Lee, Lesley Gore and Petula Clark, to name a few. Of course, there will be many Patsy Cline favourites. “We try to stay true to the original recordings,” says Brenda Lee. “We love taking our audiences on a musical journey down memory lane.” “Why do I love to sing these kinds of songs?” she emphasizes, “I think of myself as an old soul and my love of these eras certainly shines through; it’s simple, beautiful and emotional. It’s music that touches your heart and transports you to yesterday.”

At the age of six, Brenda Lee began entertaining in song and as a professional oratorical speaker. Studying piano with Eddie Ruhr as a young teen, she became a Pipe organist and continued to play for over 20 years in Melville, Sask. Since then, Cottrell’s stage career has excelled! Brenda Lee has played with the Legendary Tex Emery, Brian Sklar, the Tex Pistols, Kenny Jefferson, John Conlee, and now performs with The Legends. She has performed in numerous venues all across the province opening for the Highwaymen, and this year she will be performing at the Canadian Western Agribition.

The Legends consists of a medley of great musicians with diversified talents: Otis Young on Piano, Todd Lueck playing Lead/Rhythm Guitar, Rob Pettigrew on Bass Guitar and Don Young on Drums. All of them have an impressive resume and have played with both known local musicians and many renowned greats. Otis Young is a veteran of the Regina music scene and can just about do it all: blues, jazz and country. He



occasionally plays with the jazz group The Project but has been playing country music with The Red Hot Burritos and Stephanie Thompson and now plays with Brenda Lee & the Legends.

On Lead guitar, Todd Lueck co-founder of The Red Hot Burritos (late 80s) ended up on TNNs Nashville Now TV program and hasn’t looked back since, then touring with Brian Sklar and the Tex Pistols for shows in Europe and North America. He has worked with Grand Ladies Opry members, the Western Senators and Canada’s Polka King, Walter Ostanek.

Ron Pettigrew studied trumpet and tuba during the early years but began playing electric bass guitar professionally 44 years ago at the age of 14. He has played with local bands, Jeffersons, Friends ‘N Neighbors and Rock and Roll All Stars, and has played backup for many entertainers including Tommy Common, Gordie Tapp, Ray St. Germain, Wilf Carter, Bobby Curtola and many others.

Don Young plays the drums and has performed as a backup musician for Bob Hope, B. J. Thomas, Red Skelton, Rich Little, Wilf Carter, Ronnie Prophet, Paul Anka and numerous others. He has also worked as a performing musical contractor for headliners such as Dionne Warwick and Petula Clark. Young’s prolific career has a list of accomplishments too numerous to include here. He continues to serve as an artistic working musician and is highly respected as a music educator. He has been appointed the title of President Emeritus of the Regina Musician Assoc. Local #446 of the Canadian Federation of Musicians.

Brenda Lee & the Legends are sure to transport concert goers to a much loved time long ago, bringing fond remembrances back to memory.

“So many audience members have approached me after a performance and said, ‘Wow, I haven’t heard some of those songs for a long time. They really took me back. I even remember special moments of my life when those songs were hits.’”

“That’s what it’s all about,” says Cottrell.

Brenda Lee & the Legends will be performing live at the Mae Wilson Theatre in Moose Jaw on Saturday, October 26th at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 plus taxes and can be purchased at www.moosejawculture.com or by phone @306.693.4700.



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A 60’s Walk Down Memory Lane that Touches the Heart

by Janet Kilgannon for Moose Jaw Express



Brenda Lee Cottrell and The Legends - Don Young (drums), Brian Davis (guitar), Brenda Lee Cottrell (lead vocals), Ron Pettigrew (bass guitar), Otis Young (keyboards).

You know the music of Patsy Cline, Brenda Lee, Connie Francis, Petula Clark, Lesley Gore, and Loretta Lynn. These ‘Legendary Ladies,’ will grace the stage at the Mae Wilson Theatre on Saturday, September 26th. They are all wrapped up in one great performer, Saskatchewan’s own Brenda Lee Cottrell.

Brenda Lee Cottrell, who will enact the music of these great female singers, engages in conversation with elegance and charm. “We are excited to be bringing our show ‘The Memorable Music of the Legendary 60’s Ladies’ back to one of Saskatchewan’s best performance venues - The Mae Wilson Theatre! We enjoy taking our audiences for a ‘walk down memory lane’ reliving special moments and emotions intertwined with the timeless and classic music of these unforgettable women,” says Cottrell.

“For those returning to hear this great music, we are pleased to introduce

some new Ladies to our show - Vegas superstar Dusty Springfield, and Folk icon Mary Travers (of Peter, Paul and Mary). Singing Dusty’s songs adds glamour, reminds us of the influence she had on so many others. Mary Travers’ music brings back memories of the folk era and the peace movement. As an Entertainer, it is important to captivate and enthrall an audience with both song interpretation and theatrical performance. If I can feel it, I can sing it. That era for me is the 60’s.

“Keeping this music alive is my passion. The 60’s music was emotional, magical and often gleamed with pure innocence. Some of the Legendary Ladies in our show are still performing, but not all. Some are now gone. We may have lost the ladies, but we should never lose their music or their magic. I will only perform a song if I can really do it justice. I try to capture each artist’s style and vocal inflection.

“These singers all have a common bond

of strength in their personal struggles. It resonates throughout their music. You can hear the heartache. They sing with honesty and powerful emotion. At a recent show, a woman in the front row cried during the first four songs.”

Brenda Lee and the Legends have fans throughout North America. “Not only do audiences appreciate hearing the music performed as it was originally recorded, but we also dress in the style of the era - The Legends are quite striking in their silver or gold sequined jackets.”

It has been a successful and busy year for this group. “Our performances have varied from private functions to corporate fundraisers. We have enjoyed entertaining audiences of all ages. A great musical year also means adding some new music, which we look forward to performing at our upcoming Moose Jaw show.”

Cottrell, along with her husband Brian, is also completing her first CD of original music. “We hope to release it later this year. An Alberta-based radio station has already contacted us with an offer of air time. This is quite exciting. I have written nine songs, in a variety of genres. While they explore different styles, each has a quiet spiritual feel, and a positive message.

“Brian and I had great responses as we toured across Saskatchewan this summer. We gave audiences a glimmer of what to expect when they come to hear the music performed by the entire band. As a complete band, we have taken our show across the province and into Alberta. What was wonderful about the Alberta experience was that people from Saskatchewan followed us there.”

Cottrell shares a personal moment. “It has been a great year musically, but one

of extreme sadness, as well. I lost my dad in May, after a very courageous battle with cancer. He would have been 90 on September 13. It took me a while to find my voice again. Every song brought tears to my eyes, especially Coal Miner’s Daughter,’ which draws some very close parallels to how I grew up.

“But, as the musician my dad was, he would be pleased that ‘the show has gone on.’ I thank God for my gift, which was his as well. A wonderful singer, and accordion/harmonica player, my dad understood my passion for music. I hope I have made him proud. My family will be in attendance at the MJ show, and I will be pleased to have them all there - especially my mom.”

The band’s future itinerary is filling up - they will headline the 6th Annual Rosetown Harvest Family Festival on October 3rd, and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History Event in Regina on November 7th. “We have leads on other great intimate performance venues. Often after a performance, audience members will inform us of venues in their home communities and encourage us to bring our show there.”

“Anyone who is planning an upcoming function or event and would like to add that special element of musical entertainment can contact us through our website. We also invite you to visit us at www.brendaleecottrell.com to follow our show schedule.”

Tickets for the performance on September 26, 2015, at 7:00 pm are available for \$25 at the Moose Jaw Cultural Centre Box Office, 217 Main St. N, (306) 693-4700 or at www.moosejawculture.ca. It will be an event to experience and savour.



Brian Davis (Lead guitar/backup vocals), Brenda Lee Cottrell (lead vocals), Ron Pettigrew (bass guitar/backup vocals)



Brenda Lee Cottrell (lead vocals) and Don Young (drums, backup vocals)

The Prince Albert Daily Herald > News > Local

Singing in the '60s

Jason Kerr

Published on May 02, 201



© Herald photo by Jason Kerr

Don't ask Brenda Lee Cottrell to play favourites!

Brenda Lee Cottrell performed at the Keyhole Castle on Saturday.

The local performer has spent countless hours and shows singing hits made famous by great 1960's acts like Patsy Cline, and Brenda Lee. She calls them, "her girls," and don't bother trying to make her pick a favorite.

"I have to say it's a stalemate," Cottrell chuckled after a performance at the Keyhole Castle in Prince Albert on Saturday. "I have to stay neutral to my ladies."

Cottrell is in love with the '60s. She was hooked when her mother began playing Johnny Cash records during her childhood, and since then she's developed a repertoire of songs from about eight different stars of the era.

Her childhood love has become a full-time career, and she couldn't be more pleased.

"I think of myself of an old soul," she said. "There are eras that touch people, emotionally they touch your heart. I can't sing anything that doesn't move me."

The '60s were a turbulent time, but Cottrell said there's something unique about the music. From the lyrics, to the melody, to the composition, it's something that draws her in every time.

"It's so emotional, so heartfelt. You can't help but listen to the music and just be emotionally moved by it."

Cottrell has been playing and singing most of her life. She started as a pipe organist at the age of 12 in her hometown of Melville, and after graduation studied Voice at the University of Regina Conservatory of Performing Arts.

However, it took some time for her to take her love of the '60s to the stage.

Roughly six years ago Cottrell began performing at the Relay for Life, and with a little urging from her husband, soon began singing year-round.

"He said, try some Patsy Cline this year, so I started singing Patsy Cline songs, and then he (Cottrell's husband) said, 'I think you should try Brenda Lee as well,' and it just grew and grew."

These days, Brenda Lee Cottrell's calendar is packed with concert dates. In the past, she tried to juggle singing with her career as a nurse, but she's made the switch to full-time performer. It's a move she has no regrets about making.

"I just decided that life is too short. You better use the gift that you've been given, and if you're doing what you love to do, it's never going to be work."

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