

# A night on the road to Carnegie Hall at FEC

## 'Ken Lavigne concert'

Review

BY ELLEN TEMPLAR



PHOTO BY ELLEN TEMPLAR  
From left: Patrick Courtin, SEA producer Sandy Kuhlman, Ken Lavigne, SEA producer Karen Smales and Casey Ryder

The sounds of upbeat music from piano and double bass rang out as Ken Lavigne walked out clapping his hands and encouraging his audience to join him Saturday, Nov. 21, on stage at the Florence Events Center.

Dressed in concert black, Lavigne sang full out one of Luciano Pavarotti's favorite songs, the Neapolitan tune "Funiculi, Funicula" written in 1880 by Luigi Denza and Peppino Turco.

It is risky to perform works favored by famous and well-loved singers — but Lavigne has a powerful voice and amazing timbre and carried it off well. The audience continued to clap along at the appropriate times and the piece ended to resounding applause.

Lavigne had a good start to an evening of songs of mixed ethnicity and genre.

Between selections, Lavigne took the audience along on his Road To Carnegie Hall with tales of his dream to get there, his struggles at times with the dream and the many on his team that assisted with his eventual performance on stage there.

And tales they were. Lavigne is an accomplished and multi-talented performer who has honed his many talents to near perfection. He is as intriguing as a storyteller as he is as a classically trained singer. His true-to-

life stories were compelling and his fun sense of humor often peppered them with spontaneous laughter from his audience.

One audience member said she would have opted for more singing and less talking. After hearing Lavigne talk about his personal singing dream, another attendee was challenged to question if she had any dreams and discovered that she did.

No doubt Lavigne's storytelling talents became thought-provoking throughout the hall as he sang Mitch Leigh and Joe Darion's 1965 hit from "Man of La Mancha" — "The Impossible Dream" — beautifully.

Early in the program Lavigne again took a big risk singing Maruo Malavasi and Andrea Sandri's "Dell'amore non si sa" which was made famous by Andre Bocelli. Lavigne had a bit of trouble reaching some of the

high notes in this one. It may have been that his voice wasn't warmed up enough because the rest of the evening he nailed all of the many high notes that were to come.

One outstanding period in the evening was when Lavigne spoke of his discovery of Robert Goulet as a Broadway singer in "Camelot." Lavigne performed Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's "C'est Moi" as well as anyone has.

But it was his surprising musical theater presence and animation that caused him to delightfully shine during this song.

Any singer is only as good as his backup band and Casey Ryder on both double bass and guitar and Patrick Courtin on keyboard were barely noticeable.

They were that good. Attention is focused on the

solo performer and except for a couple of mini-solos along the way, the two instrumentalists played so well that they didn't stand out.

That's a good thing. Singers do not always perform a piece exactly the same way every time and musicians must be attuned to every nuance, pause, breath, entrance and possible hiccup a singer may make. And they must do it perfectly. Courtin and Ryder did just that.

Lavigne was admittedly inspired to classical training by Luciano Pavarotti who Lavigne believes is the greatest male opera voice of all time.

Pavarotti ended every concert singing the 1898 Neapolitan song "O Sole Mio" written by Giovanni Capurro and Eduardo di Capua. Lavigne took another risk singing this one but was totally up to the task and received a standing ovation for his efforts.

There were some wonderful Elvis Presley interpretations, some actual 1940s style crooning and more but space runs out to report on it. Lavigne, Ryder and Courtin were impressed with Florence and very much wish to return. When they do, be sure not to miss them.

Ken Lavigne was one of Seacoast Entertainment Association's 2015-2016 series concerts.

Don't miss SEA's next exciting concert with award-winning

guitarist Jesse Cook on Friday, Jan. 29. Join SEA for the pre-concert talk at 6:15 p.m. and the performance at 7 p.m.

For tickets, phone the FEC box office at 541-997-1994.

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## Soroptimists seek to give food, toys

The Soroptimist International of Florence's local Christmas Baskets Project is in full swing.

Monetary donations are being accepted for the purchase of food for the project.

Send donations to Soroptimist of Florence, P.O. Box 1209, in Florence, with "for food" or "toys" noted on the check. All monetary donations are tax deductible;

Local businesses have giving trees or totes available for donated new toys for children aged infant to age 12.

The dispersal is open to any needy family in the Florence Food Share service area.

Distribution for toys will be from the Church of the Nazarene, Dec. 19, beginning at 9 a.m.

Foods will be dispersed from the covered area at the Siuslaw Middle School, Dec. 19, beginning at 10 a.m.

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### Helping Hands Coalition

Assisting those in need in our Community. Free Hot Meals Mon-Wed-Fri 11 AM - 2 PM  
PO Box 1296 • 1339 Rhododendron Dr., Florence, OR 97439  
Call 541-997-5057 to Volunteer

### Meals on Wheels and Cafe 60

Meals on Wheels are available to people over the age of 60 who cannot get out much due to illness or advanced age and who are not eating properly, regardless of income. Cafe 60 is available for those who prefer to make new friends in a dining room setting.

1570 Kingwood  
PO Box 2313, Florence  
541-997-5673  
lanesenior meals.org

### Peace Harbor Volunteers

Join the Peace Harbor Hospital Volunteers, you will find an area of interest in a caring organization.  
400 9th Street, Florence  
541-997-8412 ext. 209

### Siuslaw Outreach Services

Recruiting volunteers for front desk reception and help line.  
9am-4pm Mon.-Fri.  
Please contact our volunteer coordinator 541-997-2816 lori@floresencsos.org  
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To include your organization in this directory, please call us @ 541-997-3441