

CHINOOK WINDS CASINO RESORT

Students Meet a Living Legend in Sonny Turner

by Teresa Simmons

A new concept was recently developed at Chinook Winds Casino Resort and a number of components went into the planning. The idea was born through the ever-constant reminder that Lincoln County students have limited exposure to the performing arts at a professional level.

Since Chinook Winds is the venue for many outstanding performers, it was a natural conclusion that, in some way, we could help expose students to some of the finest performers in the world. The question was, in what way?

Don Kennedy, director of marketing, had a discussion with Dr. Keller Coker, professor of music at Western Oregon University. Coker had an idea to offer.

He had formed the American Metropole Orchestra, the first Metropole Orchestra in the United States patterned after the Amsterdam Metropole Orchestra in Europe. It's a combination of a symphony orchestra, big band and jazz band with a little pop thrown in.

Coker was working with Sonny Turner, former lead singer for The Platters for more than a decade, revamping his accompaniment from a small band to a full orchestra. He spoke with Turner, who was excited about the opportunity to work with aspiring young vocalists. So, the idea was beginning to turn into something possible.

Turner was booked to perform at a regular concert on March 15. The day

before, however, was scheduled for a "by invitation only" concert for Chinook Winds high rollers. Prior to this concert, Turner and Coker agreed to put on an educational session for students of Lincoln County. The event – "An Evening with the Legends of Music-Meet Sonny Turner" – was scheduled to take place after school hours.

E-mails and phone calls were made to all Lincoln County School District schools and private schools. Announcements were put in the newspapers and on the radio. LCSD embraced the idea and agreed to bus students from the various schools.

Since this was such a new idea, it took awhile for people to understand exactly what was going to take place. For Chinook Winds staff, it was a learning experience as well, not knowing how many people would actually show up and how the students would relate to the program. For all of us, those questions were answered in a very positive way.

Students from private schools and public schools, including Newport, Siletz, Waldport and Taft, as well as home-schooled students began showing up at 4:45 p.m. while the rehearsal and sound check was in progress.

It's hard to imagine, with the great gap in generations and the differences in the music of today and that of the '60s, that the impact would be as positive as it was. The aspiring young



Nick Wallace, Dakota Burgins, Alex Flores and Chris Crawford from Siletz Valley Early College Academy display their Sonny Turner T-shirts from the workshop and concert, as does Principal Robert Line.

(photo by Heather Hatton)

artists (approximately 70 of them) who attended had the chance to see something most had never been exposed to and many of us take for granted.

They sat in on the rehearsal and the sound check, watching the full orchestra directed by Coker with Turner and the backup singers preparing for the upcoming concert. At the break between the rehearsal and the concert, Entertainment Manager Dale Robertson invited all of them onto the stage, where they could feel the heat from the lights and see what it would be like to look down on the audience.

He invited those who wished, to sing. Several did. Students took Dale up on his offer, stepped up to the microphone and sang unaccompanied. The finesse with which they sang and the talent they displayed were awe-inspiring.

The students each received a CD and Sonny Turner T-shirt, and one by one went backstage where Turner took the time to autograph each and every one. Everyone received a box lunch before sitting down to enjoy the concert.

Many were hesitant to leave at the end of the concert, lingering with the excitement of the evening. The Waldport students waited for Turner to come out of the dressing room after the concert and together they all sang *Amazing Grace*. It was an amazing finale to a rewarding evening.

We have received many compliments from the students, their chaperones and teachers:

Chris Thompson, Career Tech High School – Thank you for inviting our students to come to the event last Friday with Sonny Turner. It was enlightening to those who attended and we all got to see how the "show" works, which for my audio engineering students was really cool. We would be interested in attending any future events and volunteering to help set them

up. I have students who know their way around an audio console and would love to learn lights. Thanks again and we hope to hear from you soon.

I just wanted to thank you, once again, for the wonderful opportunity you provided myself and my students Friday night. We so greatly appreciated it and had a magical time. It was lovely to meet you and I look forward to the Paul Williams adventure as well!

Respectfully, June Rushing

The guests here this morning and the employees are raving, raving, raving about the show last night! I have never heard so much positive feedback in my tenure of duty here! WOW – **Betsy Tyler, Promotion Host**

The session was filmed so it could possibly be used as a model for other communities to step up to the plate and offer a similar program for their students.

The next event is Oct. 4 and will feature Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Paul Williams, best known for timeless classics such as *We've Only Just Begun*, *Rainy Days and Mondays*, *Just an Old-Fashioned Love Song* and *Rainbow Connection*.

In 1977, he won the Oscar in the Best Music – Original Song category for *Evergreen*, the theme song from *A Star is Born* sung by Barbra Streisand. Williams plans to write a song with the students attending the next session that will be performed before the night is out.

In 2009, country music singer Lynn Anderson and Motown drummer Mel Brown each will offer a special program for students.

Prior to the next event, information will be sent to local newspapers and radio, *Siletz News* and the schools.

It's the hope of Chinook Winds that these educational venues will help aspiring young artists achieve their future goals.

It's Better at the Beach!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 2008		April 11 • 5:30pm Mom's Day Special \$30 Paper Buy-in & TED Buy-in \$50, Specials \$1000, Main Games \$400		1pm 3 Free 6-Ons	1pm 1pm Birthday Bingo	1pm 5:30pm
1pm 5:30pm Birthday Bingo 3-\$1000 Bonanza Payouts (3 chances to win Bonanza)	1pm 6pm Ocean Package Day	1pm 6pm Double Point Day	1pm 6pm Roll the Dice FREE SQUARE \$500	1pm 3 Free 6-Ons	CLOSED Ironman	CLOSED Ironman
1pm 5:30pm Mom's Special & Gift from Bingo! Birthday Bingo	1pm 6pm Ocean Package Day	1pm 6pm Double Point Day	1pm 6pm Roll the Dice	1pm 3 Free 6-Ons	CLOSED Larry Gatlin & Gatlin Brothers	CLOSED Larry Gatlin & Gatlin Brothers
1pm FREE SQUARE \$500 5:30pm Indian Star \$500 Birthday Bingo	1pm 6pm Ocean Package Day	1pm 6pm Double Point Day	1pm 6pm Roll the Dice	1pm 3 Free 6-Ons	1pm 23 Birthday Bingo Senior Bingo!	CLOSED Oregon Indian Show
1pm All-U-Can Daub! 6pm Birthday Bingo	1pm 6pm Ocean Package Day	1pm 6pm Double Point Day	1pm 6pm Roll the Dice	1pm 3 Free 6-Ons	CLOSED America	CLOSED America

\$500 FREE SQUARES - May 7, 6pm session and May 18, 1pm session!
ALL-U-CAN DAUB, \$20 paper buy-in, over \$7500 in CASH & PRIZES

BONANZA BLOWOUT-May 4th during the evening session we will be blowing out the bonanza with 3 chances to win \$1000. The first guest to bingo will win \$1000, we will continue the game after that and the second guest to get a bingo will win \$1,000. We will continue on again and the third guest to bingo will win \$1,000. Multiple winners will share the \$1,000.

ROLL THE DICE-Wednesday's in May we will be having our Roll the Dice promotion. If you are a single winner on a main session game during the matinee session you will have the chance to try your luck against one of our agents. If you roll a number higher than the agent you win an extra \$25 with your payout and a glass float.

MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL-During the 5:30pm session on May 11th we will be having the Mother's Day special. Paper buy-in is just \$30 and machine buy-in is \$50. The buy-in will get you the special Mother's Day gift, Rose beads, drawing ticket, 2 six-ons and one of every game. Extras can be bought on the floor or at the register. We will be paying out over \$10,000 that session.

SENIOR BINGO-Senior Bingo will be on Friday May 23rd. If you are 55 years or over and a single winner on a main session game we will give you a choice, either \$1 for every year of your life or for you gamblers out there you can choose to win a glass float and 1 pull-tab for every year of your life.

DOUBLE POINT DAY-Tuesday's in May we will be doubling the points you receive in Bingo. For every \$1 you spend we will award you with 2 points which can be used to discount your play in the future.

ALL-U-CAN DAUB-Sunday May 25th we will be having All-U-Can-Daub during the 1pm session. The \$20 buy-in will get you up to 6 six-ons and there will be no machines during that session. Cash payouts will be over \$7,500 that day.

MONDAY'S ARE OCEAN PACKAGE DAY • ONLY \$42! THAT'S A \$30 SAVINGS

ON THE BEACH IN LINCOLN CITY 1-888-CHINOOK