



Weekend

Friday, March 7, 2014



LAUREN
ESPITIA

COLUMNIST

Singing event pairs amateurs with pros at Lyric Theatre

Admit it, you sing in the shower.

Maybe you also belt along with your favorite song in the car, and perhaps you even daydream about being on stage.

A new fundraising event is giving everyday people the opportunity to live out that dream March 15 at The Lyric Theatre.

"Singing with the Stars" is a collaborative effort between Terry Barber, founder of Artists for a Cause, and Stacy Ranieri, owner of the Firefly Group. The event pairs community members with local professional singers who coach the amateurs through a rehearsal process that culminates March 15 in a live onstage competition. Each team will perform a duet of their choice, and the professional singers will perform solos.

The event benefits Barber's nonprofit Artists for

ber's nonprofit Artists for a Cause, which encourages visual and performing artists to use their talents for community improvement. A portion of the proceeds also will go to Keep Martin Beautiful.

"I have always secretly wanted to be a judge or contestant on an 'American Idol'-type show, and I am eager to use my teaching skills to see what Linda and I can put together," said professional singer Jonathan Cummings, who is coaching Linda Weiksnar.

Cummings is a local singer and musician who has sung backup for Barry Manilow. He teaches voice and guitar lessons and has worked with Weiksnar to perfect "Lucky," a duet done first by Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat.

It's exciting to "get to watch somebody who doesn't normally do this have a moment to shine," said singer Elizabeth Casalini.

The local actress, singer and dancer has been practicing the 1980s classic "Love Lift Us Up Where We Belong" with partner Michael Izzolo. Casalini also teaches dance to children, and I predict a good deal of showmanship in this duet.

The solo performances will be worth the price of admission, with top-notch local professionals Shelly Keelor, Karin Leone and Debbie Bestor singing alongside Cummings and Casalini. Barber, who is an internationally acclaimed

countertenor, also will perform.

Joining Weiksnar and Izzolo in the group of "unsung heroes" are community members David Dew, Carley Moss and Bob Zacheo.

Tickets are available at www.lyrictheatre.com.

Lauren Espitia writes about entertainment in Martin County for #TCPalmSocial. Contact her at laurenespitia74@gmail.com or follow @laurenespitia on Twitter.

What: "Singing with the Stars"

When: 7 p.m. March 15

Where: The Lyric Theatre, 59 S.W. Flagler Ave., Stuart

Tickets: \$35, \$75

Information: www.lyrictheatre.com; 772-286-7827