

Leisa Way to celebrate 100 Years of Grand Ole Opry with upcoming concert

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The songs of legendary country singers and songwriters who have graced the stage of the Grand Ole Opry will soon be heard as Orangeville-based performer Leisa Way travels through 100 years of history in 'Opry Gold.'

Under the musical direction of Mulmur-based pianist and composer Bruce Ley, Leisa Way and her Wayward Wind Band are set to bring 'Opry Gold' to the Gibson Centre in Alliston on Sept. 11 at 7:30 p.m.

'We've taken [Opry Gold] across Canada, from East to West, and this is the first time we're bringing it to the Gibson Centre, which is unbelievable,' said Way. '[Opry Gold] is about the music and these little gems of stories.'

Written, produced, and performed by Leisa Way herself, 'Opry Gold' celebrates the history of the Grand Ole Opry through the stories and music of the legendary artists who have performed on the stage.

Way and her band originally debuted the 'Opry Gold' concert nearly a decade ago and have gone on to perform the show in roughly 50 theatres across Canada.

During the show, Way and her band take the audience through the decades of the Grand Ole Opry by singing to songs of early country legends such as Dolly Parton, Hank Williams, and Patsy Cline to modern-day country stars, including Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood, Garth Brooks, and Lady A.

The inspiration behind 'Opry Gold' was Way's own mother, Eileen.

It was the mid-2010s and Way, at the time, had already written, produced, and performed around eight of her own shows. Recognizing that her mother was getting older, she wanted a way to include her in a show, so she brought to life one of her mother's 'greatest loves,' The Grand Ole Opry.

'I wanted her to be able to come see a show that was the music she was brought up on,' said Way. 'I thought it was a really cool idea to share the stories of the artists who appeared on the Opry; the stories of their songs, of the artists themselves and how they got to be there.'

The return of 'Opry Gold' comes as the country music world prepares to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Grand Ole Opry this fall.

The Grand Ole Opry began as a simple radio broadcast in 1925, when Nashville radio station WSM became one of the first all-country music stations. The Grand Ole Opry was held at the Ryman Auditorium from 1943 to 1974, before moving to the custom-built home, The Grand Ole Opry House.

Over the decades, the Grand Ole Opry set the stage for country music legends, including Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, George Jones, and Tammy Wynette, as well as today's stars like Shania Twain, Keith Urban, Taylor Swift, Darius Rucker, Kenny Chesney, and Zac Brown Band.

While 'Opry Gold' was created nearly 10 years ago, the show has undergone numerous redrafts and changes, with each performance different from the next.

“We switch the songs out often because, how can you possibly cover all these artists in two hours,” said Way. “We also change it depending on what songs are popular,”

Way's multi-talented band includes vocalist/guitarist Brant Garratt (Duke Street Turnaround); bassist-singer Mark Dunn (Jim Galloway's Wee Big Band); Don Reid on drums (Orchestra London & Pauly and the Goodfellas); and Alex George on fiddle (Natalie McMaster), who are all rising stars in the Canadian music scene. New to the show this fall is Matt Ballagh on lead vocals and bass, an up-and-coming young star who has performed for Drayton Entertainment in “Fiddler on the Loose, Sorry I'm Canadian.”

Tickets for “Opry Gold” at the Gibson Centre in Alliston on Sept. 11 can be purchased at <https://gibsoncentre.com/our-events/opry-gold-sep-11-2025> or by calling 705-435-2828.

More information about Leisa Way and her Wayward Wind Band, including future shows, can be found at www.waytogoproductions.ca.