This page was exported from - The Auroran
Export date: Thu Mar 28 13:40:30 2024 / +0000 GMT

Barrie student takes the Hoedown Showdown crown



By Brock Weir

16-year-old John Anderson was a tough act to follow.
The Grade 11 student from Barrie was the first finalist to take the stage Friday night in the Hoedown Showdown competition, where 10 finalists from across Ontario vied for the crown of Canada's next country star.
Nine more singers took on the challenge, but his renditions of Keith Urban's ?You Look Good in My Shirt? and Tim McGraw's ?Live Like Your Were Dying? were enough to seal the deal and Anderson returned to class on Monday with plenty to talk about.
?I am still just shocked that it happened,? said Anderson whose win secured him a grand prize valued of $20,000, including $2,500 cash, a Yamaha guitar and case, two fill days of recording at Metalworks Studios and the ?ultimate artist package? featuring professional management, coaching, styling and song-writing led by industry professionals.
?It has been a really big rush,? he continued, absorbing his win. ?It was a long journey to get here. I came into the competition last year and didn't even place. A big part of it was me overthinking things, but coming back I had tried to relax a little bit more and tried to give it my best.?
A watershed moment occurred for Anderson in the Mentorship Week leading up to the finals, which kicked off the two-day Wild, Wild West Hoedown, hosted by Magna International, and was followed by headliners Chad Brownlee that evening and, the following night, by Tom Cochrane with Red Rider.
The Mentors took him out of his comfort zone and parted him from his guitar, an instrument he describes as something of a ?security blanket.?
?They told me to do a song and I didn't really know the guitar work too well, so the first time we ran through it I just sang it without playing a guitar,? Anderson explained. ?Tom (Cross of Metalworks) said, ?I actually like that. You're not going to use your guitar for this one.' I hadn't done that yet, so I said we'd try it and it ended up working in the end.
?I always feel like it is my safety blanket and I would always be able to hide behind my guitar. It is just a mental thing and I really don't know what to do with my hands.'
Nevertheless, it did the trick has only bolstered his determination to pursue a professional singing career
?My goal is to tour and be known as a musician and known as a writer,? he said. ?That would be an amazing dream come true.?
Securing second place in the Hoedown Showdown this year was Cameron von Criegern of Peterborough. Rounding out the top three was a tie ? a first in Showdown history ? between Lauren Renee Vandervecht of Sharon and Schomberg's own Zoe Jayne.
17-year-old Jayne wowed the judges with two selections from the Kacey Musgraves songbook, ?Follow Your Arrow? and ?Somebody to Love,? performances which event host Beverley Mahood dubbed, ?authentic, real and captivating.?
?We love you,? said Beverley. ?Keep doing what you do because you are so, so good.?
While he did not place in the Top 3, Top 10 finalist Patrick James Clark of Mulmur was, in the words of Ms. Mahood, ?most improved overall? with his performances of Thomas Rhett's ?T-Shirt? and ?Somebody's Heartbreak? by Hunter Hayes.