

Hoedown Showdown crowns Georgina's Johnny Green



By Jeff Doner

The weather cleared up and the clouds parted for the conclusion of the Hoedown Showdown at the Aurora Ribfest on Sunday, where the final six competitors sang their hearts out in a bid to win first place.

The winner of the competition will go on to perform at the Magna Hoedown celebration this Saturday to open for country star Terri Clark.

After whittling down 70 original applicants to 40 for the preliminary rounds, that number was cut in half to 20 to perform at Ribfest on Friday. Only six would go on to compete in the final round on Sunday afternoon.

Smooth singer Johnny Green ended up taking the top prize earning praise from the judges throughout. He was the only male competitor in the top six.

Green, 25, has been playing guitar and singing for years, but was nearly held speechless after the announcement was made.

"I am just so excited," he said. "The company that I was in was just wonderful today. All three of us, I had no idea who was going to win and everybody was just fantastic today and I'm very pleased to have won in the company of everyone here."

Originally from Queensville and now living in Willow Beach, Green started playing guitar when he was 16 and started to sing just a year or two after. He feels he has recently gotten away from his music a little bit with work, but the competition has put him back on track.

"I did the band thing for a while and I've been working every since, so it's kind of nice to get back on stage and do this again," he said. "And it's definitely one of the biggest [shows]. I actually played the opening of the Magna Centre years ago when I was 19, that was pretty big too, but this is definitely up there. My first big outdoor audience, that's for sure."

Still reeling from the win, he said sharing the stage with Terri Clark will be an honour.

"I'm so excited. To play in that venue and in that environment will just be out of this world and a lot of fun. It's my dream and it's nice to get this recognition that will sort of help me put my focus back on to it."

Aurora didn't have any competitors in the top three, but did have one in the top six that gave the competition a run for their money. Shannon Beresford was one of the final cuts in the competition and got the local crowd going with some catchy Shania Twain tunes.

"She's my idol. I grew up listening to her and every girl has that song that they sing to with their brush and a mirror. Shania was the girl that I sang most to."

She said singing in front of a packed home crowd was a great feeling

?It was awesome because I was the only one left from Aurora, so it was great to be in front of everyone here. My friends and family are here, so all the support has been awesome,? she said.

Beresford also learned to play guitar at 16 and said she has been singing her whole life.

?My mom always says that I was singing before I could even talk. I have always loved to sing and my brothers play guitar and my dad is really musical, so I figured one day I would too.?

Even though she didn't get the exact finish she wanted, Beresford was thrilled to make it into the top six and marked the experience as one of a kind.

?It has been amazing. Everyone has been so supportive, humble and encouraging to each other. The judges have been so nice and everything has been just so well put together. It has just been an awesome experience.?