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— Daily Sun Staff Report

BACKSTAGE PASS

Insights on stage, screen and beyond

Full House Enjoys VPO Pops Concert at The Sharon

Conductor and founder of the orchestra, Pasquale Valerio, recently returned from a summer of traveling.

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Senior Staff Writer



Submitted photo
The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra opened its season with a pops concert at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Sunday evening. "I've heard the orchestra play maybe 15 times since I've lived here," said Bob Phillips, of the Village of Bonita. "This concert is always my favorite since I'm more familiar with the music, plus they usually have some really talented singers. I think

they're great." Guest artists Sean Stork, Mark Antonio de Villiers, Chris Horn, Marcella Richardson, Norman Lee and Family Affair added rich vocals and a friendly atmosphere to the show. "I just want to preface this

before we start. I'm no Elvis Presley," joked Horn before singing "Love Me Tender." "But we're going to give it a shot." Valerio noted that while he

travels a lot, The Villages is a home for his music.

"Walking into The Sharon is like opening the door when I get home," Valerio said.

Kristen Fiore is a senior staff writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5270, or kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com.

A nearly capacity audience had the pleasure of hearing their favorite songs played in a rich musical medium Sunday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra made its first appearance of the 2018-19 season with a pops concert.

Taps of drums mixed with brass undertones and soothing string melodies to songs such as "God Only Knows," "Do You Hear the People Sing," "Amazing Grace," "Can't Help Falling in Love" and other patriotic, popular and theatrical favorites.

Conductor and founder of the orchestra, Pasquale Valerio, recently returned from a summer of traveling around the United States and Europe as a guest conductor.

Viola player Yaniv Cohen joined Valerio during some of his time in Italy and said it was the highlight of his summer.

"It was wonderful," Cohen said. "We did two programs in a week and it was very intensive and really remarkable to see Pasquale work with these different groups and see how easy and natural everything is and how people respond so warmly to it."

Valerio is glad that shows with the VPO are starting back up, and said he hoped to put on a beautiful concert for the audience.

"I decided to do a pops concert for the September inauguration every year to celebrate Labor Day weekend," Valerio said. "Labor Day weekend is a weekend designed for family, and this has become a family concert."

The pops concert is an audience favorite, and this year's show was no exception as shown by the droves of patrons that flocked into The Sharon

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