

## Talented students being featured

By Meagan Pecjak

Loyalist College is right on key when it comes to supporting their students' talents.

Loyalist College will be holding an Open Mic on Thursday, February 16, in the Shark Tank pub at the school.

The show will consist of the many talents that Loyalist students have to offer. Blue Suit Jacket is just an example of one of the performances of the night.

Other performances include: Taylor Lewis, Eric Ceasar, Noah Reede and several more talented students.

Blue Suit Jacket is a local band with a dash of Loyalist college talent with Stephen Hounam, a second-year Loyalist College TV and new media student. He is new to the band and will be playing guitar, and singing back-up vocals.

"It's so nice to play with other people instead of alone," said Hounam.

"I am so excited to have a band. It's actually really exciting. I have been playing acoustic solo because I just haven't found the right people."

Hounam said that they hope for a great turn out at the Open Mic. "I've been telling a lot of my friends just to shake up some interest," he said. "Usually there's a lot of people wherever we play."

"We are hoping for a pretty big audience," said President of Student Government, Chris Barnim.

"I know last year we had a big turn out. So we are hoping for that again this year."

Blue Suit Jacket will be the closing act of the night.

Hounam said that because they perform last, Blue Suit Jacket is hoping that people don't start clearing out before they get to start.

Marcus Curle is a second-year electrical techniques student and a member of Student Government as the Building Sciences and Skills leader. He said that they are expecting about 100 or more people to come to the show.



Photo by Meagan Pecjak

**Stephen Hounam is a Loyalist College student participating in the Open Mic at the college on Thursday, Feb. 16, with the band Blue Suit Jacket. He is a new member and said that "it's so nice to play with other people instead of alone."**

When it comes to narrowing it down to a certain number of performers, the evaluation is "really straight forward," said Curle, one of the judges for the auditions.

"If someone is kind of shy, but has talent, we would rather have them," he said.

Barnim said that the number of people who sign up to audition varies from year

to year. "We never really have the same number," said Barnim.

"We have some very talented people on the card for that night, so definitely

come check them out."

The show starts at 8 p.m. this Thursday, and goes until midnight.

"Come out and support the talent of

## Writer shares proud moment on the audition stage at Open Mic

By Meagan Pecjak

I never really thought much about auditioning for Open Mic, but suddenly there I was.

I walked onto the stage guitar in hand, with my legs shaking. The judges sat in a line with their eyes looking up at me,

waiting for me to start.

At this point, nerves had taken over. My palms began to sweat, my breathing uneven, but I was up there now, and it was too late to turn back.

I started off by playing an acoustic version of a Paramore song, one of my favourites. I had spent a whole month

practising just for this moment, on top of many months of knowing the song. I still felt it wasn't good enough, and that I should have practised more. I should have prepared myself better for my one shot onstage.

When I finished playing my second song by Taylor Swift, I finally felt com-

fortable onstage, standing in front of a microphone with bright lights shining down on me.

At this point, I was just proud of myself for auditioning, for putting myself out there, and doing something I have always wanted.

I didn't expect to receive an email a

week later stating that I had made it in, and that I would be performing, along with many other talented Loyalist students, on Feb. 16. The schedule was up, and I was one of the first performances for the night.

I thought I was nervous for my audition, this is a totally different story.

## Albert College students present play about homosexuality

By Amielle Christopherson

Students from Albert College received a standing ovation for their performance of The Laramie Project on Saturday evening.

The play was written by the Tony Award-winning playwright Moisés Kaufman and is based on more than 200 interviews that he and the members of Tectonic Theatre Company conducted. It has gone on to become one of the most performed plays in North America.

Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old University of Wyoming student who died in 1998 because of wounds he suffered

when he was attacked because he was gay.

The cast of 16 students acted in more than 60 parts and performed for their fellow students Thursday, and for the public on Friday and Saturday.

In Albert College, where the audience was concentrated in the front rows reserved for family of the cast members, the only sound was that of the lines being said and the humming as the spotlights switched. Other than the rare moments of humour, the space was quiet for the duration of the three-hour, three-act play.

"We learned a lot about how totally opposed people were to that kind of

thing," said student and cast member Emily Hoffman, "how totally, insanely and obsessively [against] people could be to what was going on. And we didn't realize that that was something that happened."

Cast members also noted that it's not a problem that's been fixed in the last 14 years.

"Even the fact that it had happened so many years ago, it's something that's still happening today," said student Julie Burns.

"People are protesting gay soldiers at their funerals. So it's just kind of bringing all that together, that it's still happening

today," Burns said.

Teacher and director Leslie Austin-Profit was happy with how supportive and positive the school community was toward the students putting on the play.

"In the media lately, there's been a lot of sad news about young people, cyber-bullying and bullying often related to homophobia and kids taking their own lives, and I just thought that it was relevant to what is happening today," she said.

As she and her students discussed the play and some of the things that had come out of the violent incident, they covered the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr.

Hate Crimes Prevention Act that President Barack Obama signed into law in 2009 and how it was a reflection of positive change.

While they did cut some of the harsh language out of the script, they did keep the derogatory language against gays.

"We felt we had to keep because there is the lesson that, as the priest says, 'They're the seeds of violence,'" Austin-Profit explained.

"And it's been very supportive. Not a single person in three nights' performances has said anything other than it was positive."

## Canadian Hanson fans follow band across continent

*Band's logo tattooed to neck of one traveller*

By Manuela Garay-Giraldo

To sisters Susie, Amy and Jeanie Tonzola along with their childhood friend Meaghan Huras, Hanson is not just a band from their childhood, Hanson is a life experience.

For the past 15 years, the girls have followed the band around North America, attended hundreds of shows, spent thousands of dollars on Hanson paraphernalia and met the band members several times.

"One time we got into the hotel elevator and there was Zac (the drummer)," recalled Susie.

"It turns out we were staying in the room next to him!"

This year luck favoured the four Canadian friends. Hanson decided to do a more extensive Canadian tour, which suited the sisters and their friend just fine. The four ladies embarked on a road trip to Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Belleville and Toronto and had front row spots for all the shows.

"We always get there first, so we always have front row seats," said Susie.

"One time we camped out for 43 hours at the end of November," recalled Jeanie.

"It was freezing, but totally worth it. When they talk 'the girls who camped out' they're talking about us."

The admiration for Hanson runs so deep, Jeanie has a tattoo of the band's logo on her neck.

"I was debating between the Hanson logo or a music note. Then the day I was gonna get the tattoo, Meaghan texted me 'OMG, it's our 10th anniversary

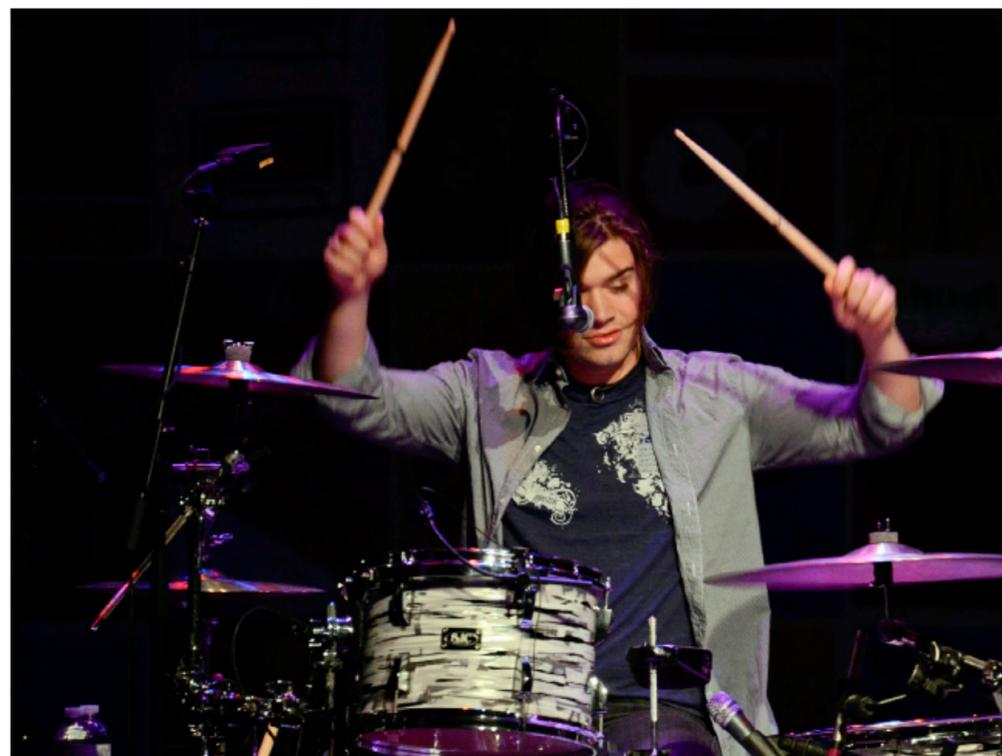


Photo by Manuela Garay-Giraldo

**Hanson's drummer, Zac, performs at Belleville's Empire Theatre on Thursday, Feb. 9. The band came to Belleville as part of the band's Canadian leg of their Shout It Out Tour.**

since we first met Hanson! That's when I made up my mind. It was a sign," said Jeanie.

"I just thought, I'll never stop liking them, and even if I do, they still hold 15 years of my life. They represent my child-

hood at this point."

One of the major differences following the band this time around is that the girls have their own cars and are driving.

"It feels so weird. This is the first time

I've driven to a Hanson concert," said Meaghan. "I remember I used to have to beg my parents to let me go, and then we'd be travelling on a bus with a ton of blankets."

The fans have met the band countless

times, and during their latest appearance in Ottawa, the girls managed to be the only fans at a Hanson appearance on CTV.

The girls gushed about how lead singer Taylor Hanson told them he was glad they were finally brought in from the cold to warm up. They also recalled how drummer Zac Hanson gave Meaghan his drumsticks at the end of the show, and how lead guitarist Isaac is so stylish as of late.

During a recent phone interview guitarist Isaac said, "when you come and see a Hanson show, it's a unique experience every night.

"For us, it is most important we represent the music in the most exciting and motivated way. One of those ways is to make sure that, whether you've been to 20 shows or this is your first one, that it is interesting and different."

It looks like they are doing something right, because according to Amy, Thursday's show in Belleville at the Empire Theatre was the best so far.

"They just keep getting better and better," said Amy. "I think the crowds are also getting better, but I honestly think this one's the best one so far. I can't wait for the Toronto show tomorrow!"

At the end of the Belleville show, the girls waited out in the cold in front of the band's tour bus for over an hour to get autographs. Eventually Zac and Isaac came out for a bit.

Susie even managed to get the setlist and found out the band was making an appearance on Breakfast Television in Toronto. You better believe the girls were there and that somehow they got front row spots at the concert later that night at Toronto's Phoenix Concert Hall.