



Photo by Mandy Larade

Dona Plumton participates in the draw for the \$2,900 pendant at the Cougars for Cancer fundraiser at Matt & Joe's Night Club Friday night.

Bringing the Throwdown to Belleville

By Zachary Shunock

The stage at the Empire Theatre has been graced by the presence of many great acts, but none quite like this.

Three of country music's biggest names have teamed up as part of the Your Town Throwdown tour, aiming to bring the party atmosphere to towns across Canada.

Kicking off in the east coast and working its way west, the tour features country stars Jason Blaine, Deric Ruttan and Chad Brownlee. The Belleville stop of the Your Town Throwdown tour comes to the Empire Theatre on Saturday, Oct. 26.

All three artists have performed at different venues in Belleville in the past and say they are looking forward to their return to the area.

"The Your Town Throwdown tour will be my fourth time playing at the Empire Theatre," said Ruttan.

"The shows are always really fun there, and that's a beautiful venue." Ruttan's previous visit to the Empire was to film a Country Music Television special with Dean Brody and Aaron Lines.

"That's the cool thing about this Your Town Throwdown tour is that most of the venues are either theatres or clubs, so I think it's going to be a little more of an up-front and in-your-face experience, which is what I really enjoy," Ruttan added.

Brownlee has played in what can be considered the big leagues of music as well as sports, after being drafted in the sixth round to the Vancouver Canucks in the 2003 draft.

"I've learned a lot from the game of hockey, the difference being when I'm on stage I'm not getting slammed into the boards and fearing for my safety," said Brownlee.

"I've always had a good time coming to play in Ontario. I seem to have a growing fan base coming from there and Belleville is no exception, so I definitely had a good time," said Brownlee, who performed at the Quinte Exhibition at the Belleville fairgrounds in 2011.

The Your Town Throwdown tour is different than what may be considered typical for concerts. In this case, the artists say they are looking for each town across Canada to bring their own energy.

"Each tour you want to be unique and be its own thing. So there's definitely going to be elements people have never seen before," said Brownlee. "It's got kind of a party connotation to it. So, we're looking for high energy and a lot of fun at the shows."

Although all three artists have hits that are ballads, the Your Town Throwdown tour strays from their regular song list.

"We're focusing on our more up-tempo songs just because of the nature of what this tour is. It's more about the party and we're challenging each town as we move our way west to sort of out-party the town before," said Ruttan. "We're starting on the east coast, so the rest of Canada might be screwed because they know how to party, and will set the bar pretty high."

In the weeks preparing for the tour, the artists attended photo shoots, rehearsals and have been putting together a series of online videos featuring all three performers and some comical scenarios featuring their music and chemistry.

"Well, we're going to make sure we have enough beer on our rider to bring the throw down to you town," said Blaine, advising "Definitely bring your party pants people."

"Beyond that, all three of us are basically just going to gather up our biggest hits, what we think are the fan favorites and together with a new song or two, because we all have new music out as well," added Blaine.

Brownlee recently released his new single that fits the purpose of the Your Town Throwdown tour called *Where the Party at*.

Blaine's latest single *Rock it Country Girl* recently made the top 15 chart on country radio.

Ruttan has also released his new album *Take the Week off*.

All new releases are available on iTunes. You can also visit the Your Town Throwdown site at www.yourtowntrowdown.com.

Ladies only at cancer fundraiser

Cougars for Cancer raises funds for pediatric cancer

By Mandy Larade

Ladies, gold, and lingerie, all for a cause. The fifth annual Cougars for Cancer event was held at Matt & Joe's Nightclub in Belleville on Friday night.

This was a ticketed, ladies-only event, featuring fashion shows, local merchandise for sale, spa treatments, psychic readings, live and silent auctions and a guest performance by country singer Brett Kingswell. There were over 300 ladies attending.

Although October is known as breast cancer awareness month, this event was geared towards raising money for pediatric cancer.

It's a cause that Michelle Hunter feels is too overlooked.

Hunter has a daughter battling with cancer, and has been endearingly nicknamed a "momcologist."

"This is a call to action," she said in her speech at the event.

Hunter said she feels that there is not enough being done with research for better treatments for pediatric cancer.

"It is the year 2013. We have put a man on the moon. We've created technology beyond our wildest imagination. It is about time that we add 'cure childhood cancer' to our list of things that we have done."

September is the official month for pediatric cancer with the symbol being a golden ribbon. However, Hunter said there is a lack of awareness about the issue.

"Not once during this month did I see our ribbon on any merchandise, or on any advertisement."

Chair and treasurer of the event, Anya-Deane Best, agrees that this is a worthy cause, and said she is grateful for the amount of work put into this event. Best said the committee has been planning this event since the beginning of 2013



Photo by Mandy Larade

Denise Arseneau, Christine McArthur, Danielle Latulippe, Arlene Ravensburgen, Sherri Cochrane, Rhonda Goodfellow, and Deanne Chafe are all dolled up for the Cougars for Cancer fundraiser at Matt & Joe's Night Club.

and that the teamwork this year has been incredible.

"Everybody just did their job and all I did was just oversee everything. And it made it so easy."

Best gives credit to the local Canadian Cancer Society branch in Belleville, applauding them for their help.

"I do want to say that the people at the local branch are awesome, and they care so much about what they're doing."

Local businesses set up tables of merchandise with a percentage of the proceeds going to the cause.

Among the business owners was Leticia Siasat of La Maison d'Eva, a lingerie shop in Belleville and Kingston.

Siasat sees the importance and relevance of fundraising for this cause.

"I love the fact that it's a benefit for pediatric cancer. That's a charity that we rarely hear about."

La Maison d'Eva was one of four clothing companies to host a fashion show

during the event. Siasat had models come out wearing both bad bras and good bras, so that people could see the difference between the two.

Although the event was full of fun, Siasat acknowledged the importance of citizens, including business owners, becoming aware of the different causes to advocate.

"I hope that they become more aware – that there are other cancers out there and there are other charities that they can be putting their efforts into."

Advocate reacts to violence against women throne speech

By Natalie McMullen

Social inequities are the root cause of violence against women, and yet there is no recognition of that at the federal level, says a leading national women's rights advocate.

Provincial governments have recognized that social inequity plays a major role in this issue and have developed plans accordingly, but the federal government is lagging behind, says the advocate.

All of the provinces and territories have implemented strategies to tackle the issue of violence, but Lise Martin, executive director of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, said a co-ordinated approach is missing on the national stage.

"Most provinces have action plans, and

'Most provinces have action plans, and recognize that violence against women is a result of social inequalities. There is no acknowledgement of that at the federal level!'

Lise Martin

recognize that violence against women is a result of social inequalities. There is no acknowledgement of that at the federal level."

For years, Canadian women's groups

have been calling on the federal government to develop a National Action Plan to address violence against women.

Martin said she was disappointed no concrete measures were announced during last week's speech from the throne, which opened the second session of the 41st parliament.

Governor General of Canada, David Johnston, who delivered the speech, mentioned the government would "renew its efforts to address the issue of murdered and missing Aboriginal women." But despite international pressure to convene a National Public Commission of Inquiry, including a recent call from the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has failed to take action.

Between 2001 and 2006, Brian Vallée writes in his book *The War on Women*,

there were "101 Canadian soldiers and police officers killed." During that same period, he adds "more than 500 women ... met the same fate."

According to a recent press release by the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, "In 2010, there were 593 shelters for women survivors of abuse and their children operating in Canada with a total of 11,461 beds."

Minister of Health, and former Minister for the Status of Women, Rona Ambrose, indicated she would make domestic violence a national priority, in a speech made at the annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association in August.

"I am committed to working with all orders of government and organizations to lead change and gain momentum on the issue of family violence," Ambrose said.

"Aboriginal women are three and half times more likely than non-aboriginal women to be victims of violence."

On Oct. 8, The Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses released a report calling on the federal government to develop a National Action Plan on violence against women.

"According to the report "in the absence of a National Action Plan, responses to violence against women in Canada are largely fragmented, often inaccessible, and can work to impede rather than improve women's safety."

The next step for Martin is to collaborate with other women's group, including the Native Women's Association of Canada, to develop a National Action Plan, and work with all political parties to integrate it in their platforms leading up to the 2015 election.