

Liona Boyd sings nostalgia at Rose Theatre

Brampton Guardian

BRAMPTON— Never in her wildest dreams did classical guitar virtuoso Liona Boyd dream she would reinvent herself a singer/songwriter.

But she did. And she's loving it.

"This was a huge step for me," she told The Guardian in an interview about her Nov. 23 performance at the Rose Theatre. "I used to lip sync... and when I was seven years old I was told to leave the choir."

But now, her performance style is being compared to likes of "Enya meets Leonard Cohen".

She admits that although a rare disorder prevents her from playing the complex chords that put her on the map as 'The First Lady of the Guitar', she should have been writing songs all along.

"I've come full circle— I've always been a writer," she said, adding it was a natural next step to move from classical guitar to writing songs.

What sparked her passion for her new-found focus was a sense of patriotism for Canada.

Boyd emigrated to Canada at age eight when she came from England "on a ship in a hurricane", and was raised in Toronto. It wasn't until later in her career that she moved to California, and later Miami and then Connecticut, before she found her way back "home".

And it during a trip to Berlin, around that time, she realized that Canada didn't have many patriotic songs— and decided she would be the one to craft one.

Envisioning a collaborative effort, much like that of Tears Are Not Enough, Boyd wrote Canada My Canada and enlisted Canadian musicians and figures to perform on the track. It includes contributions from Jann Arden, Serena Ryder, Ron McLean, Dan Hill, Chris Hadfield— and more— and was release in September 2013.

It's featured on an Boyd's album titled The Return: To Canada With Love, which celebrates Canada though 15 songs, three of which are instrumentals.

"It's very powerful, very emotional, very personal," she said of the album. "It was inspired by my returning to Canada after 20 years away. I realize what a great country it is, and this is kind of like my love letter to Canada."

The album will be the focus of her Rose Theatre main stage performance, where she will be joined by special guest Michael Savona.

The two will accompany each other, and at times play together, bringing a mix of storytelling, singing and instrument to the stage.

And, she makes a point of meeting her audience after the show and encourages fans to bring anything they might want autographed.

"It's a very unique kind of concert, and I don't know when will be the next time, if ever, I will play in Brampton," she said. "It's a good opportunity to be transported into a different dimension for a while... and be engaged in the spirit of the season and Canada."

For tickets and information, call the Rose Theatre box office at 905-874-2800 or visit www.rosetheatre.ca.



Liona Boyd will perform at the Rose Theatre on Nov. 23.