

Raue Center series shines on Nashville March 1

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Raue Center's "Nashville Backstage Series: A Country Cabaret" comes back to Crystal Lake at 8 p.m. Friday, March 1. The series features singer-songwriters straight out of Nashville like Sherrié Austin, Tony Haselden and Will Rambeau. Get up close and personal with artists who have penned hits for music legends like Blake Shelton, Faith Hill and George Strait.

This series, originally started in partnership with Blue Bird Cafe under the guidance of Michael Bush and modeled after the Grand Ole Opry, features some of the hottest acts to come out of Tennessee today.

American Idol and The Voice's inclusion of Keith Urban and Blake Shelton on their respective judging panels, as well as television shows like "Nashville," have contributed to the country music's surge in popularity.

Nashville Backstage recently welcomed Georgia Middleman and Gary Burr who, along with Kenny Loggins, make up the band Blue Sky Riders. The trio is currently receiving high praise for their recent studio album titled "Finally Home."

Nashville Backstage has one additional date at the end of the season: June 28. Single tickets start at \$24 or a series pass is available. Visit rauecenter.org or contact the box office at 26 N. Williams St. or by calling (815) 356-9212.

Australian singer/songwriter Sherrié Austin has written for dozens of other artists in the last few years, including Tim McGraw's "Shotgun Rider", Blake Shelton's "Good At Startin' Fires", and even the King himself, George Strait, who cut "Where Have I Been All My Life." Most recently, her songwriting led to the hilarious duet by Trace Adkins and Blake Shelton called "If I Was A Woman." Her latest release, "Circus Girl," is her first in eight years.

Tony Haselden, a guitarist and vocalist, relocated to Nashville several years ago

and is one of the top songwriters/producers in country music. Tony wrote the No. 1 country hits “That’s My Story” by Colin Ray, “It Ain’t Nothin” by Keith Whitley, and “You Know Me Better Than That” by George Strait and produced the country artists Michelle Wright, The Kinleys and The Wilkinsons. Tony also founded the group Louisiana’s LeRoux, a cult favorite along the bayou and nationwide, who blend a matchless gumbo of sounds, including blues, R&B, funk, jazz, rock, and Cajun to make a sizzling sound.

Will Rambeaux is a singer/songwriter/producer from Lafayette, La. in the heart of Cajun country. With the help and encouragement of Roy Orbison, he moved to Nashville in the 1980s and has since had three No. 1 hits, including Faith Hills record-breaking first single “Wild One”, as well as dozens of songs recorded by such artists as Dolly Parton, Blake Shelton, John Michael Montgomery and Patty Loveless. He has also produced many album projects including four CDs by with Austin.

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