

The Villages News

Jimmy and Jay Osmond pay tribute to Andy Williams at Savannah Center

BY TONY VIOLANTI JULY 7, 2016

Jimmy Osmond sang “Moon River,” with reverence and style Thursday at the Savannah Center. Listening to the singer, you could almost feel his longing for a departed “huckleberry friend.”



Jimmy Osmond pays tribute to Andy Williams

That lyric from “Moon River” was written by Johnny Mercer and the music composed by Henry Mancini. But it was Andy Williams who turned the song into an American standard.

Williams died four years ago at 84, but for Jimmy Osmond and his family, the singer’s music and memory endures.

“Andy was our boss, mentor and friend,” Osmond said after two performances in the Savannah Center. “He was like family.”

The Osmond family, including Donny and Marie, will forever owe a debt to Williams. He first gave them national exposure that helped turn the Osmonds into stars. Jimmy Osmond, 53, is the youngest of the singing family. He was also closest to Williams.

“Andy knew I produced shows and have a theater,” Osmond said. “Before he died, he told me, ‘Jimmy, I want you to keep this (my music) going.’”

You can see a clip of Jimmy Osmond talking about Williams here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKM4iluq1IE>

And so, the “Andy Williams Moon River” concert show was born. It features such Williams’ classics, “Can’t Get Used to Losing You,” “Love Story,” “Charade,” “More,” “Music to Watch Girls By,” “Speak Softly Love” and, of course, “Moon River.” Osmond also showed home movies of Williams and the Osmond family, as well as television video.



Osmond has been performing it at his theater in Branson, MO but The Villages was the first stop on a current national tour.

Jimmy Osmond, right, and his brother Jay Osmond pay tribute to Andy Williams at the Savannah Center



Charlie Green delivered a powerful performance

In addition to Jimmy, the show includes his brother, Jay, and rising young singing star Charlie Green, who was discovered by Simon Cowell. They were backed by a four-piece band and this was a powerful, fun evening, filled with music, comedy, and nostalgia.

Osmond opened things up with a jumpy pop number, "Charade," followed by a Williams' arrangement of "Can't Take My Eyes Off You."

Charlie Green, 18, was playing keyboards, but soon stepped to center stage to sing. He comes from England and delivered a rousing version of "Feeling Good." Then he went back to the '50s, when Williams scored a pop hit with a hint of rock and roll called "Butterfly." Green did justice to another early Williams' number,

"Can't Get Used to Losing You."

But the young singer really showed his chops on a couple of classics: "Maria," from "West Side Story," and "Alfie."

"Alfie came out in 1966, I bet a lot of you remember when it came out," Green said. "I don't."

Jay Osmond came out in blistering, rocking style near the middle of the show. He sat behind the drums and delivered a high-powered musical and vocal performance on "Rock and Roll Music." Then he teamed with his kid brother on a country oldie, with some speed-rap lyrics called "The Auctioneer."

Jimmy and Jay then closed their set with a heart-warming "Through the Years," singing as the video screen behind them showed pictures of the Osmond family and Andy Williams.



Jimmy Osmond spent plenty of time off stage, schmoozing with the fans in the audience.

Georgette Walsh serenaded by Jimmy Osmond

Like Williams, Osmond has an ingratiating personality and glows interacting with the people in the seats. Osmond offered birthday serenades, anniversary wishes and a couple of quick dances with some lucky ladies.

"He was fabulous," said Georgette Walsh, who did a quick minute-waltz with Osmond. "He's respectful, polite and so genuine," added Walsh, visiting her father, Arthur, who lives in The Villages.

Villager Kathy Ingraham also had a dance with Jimmy. "I was singing along with him, then he came up and asked me to dance," she said. "I put my arms around him and forgot the words to the song."

It was that kind of show, and the warm and friendly Osmond vibes kept coming all night long. Especially for the last number, when Jimmy Osmond closed with “Moon River,” which captured the spirit of Andy Williams better than any words or videos.

“There will never be another entertainer like Andy Williams,” Jimmy Osmond said. “It’s wonderful to be here tonight and sing his music again.”