

THEY EARNED YOUR VOTE

Now America's Got Talent Live! Takes The Stage

by Megan Riggs



Recycled Percussion



Jerry Springer

If you're a fan of the popular reality TV competition "America's Got Talent," you won't want to miss the live stage version at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino. The variety show features host Jerry Springer as well as several acts from season four of "America's Got Talent," including winner and country singer Kevin Skinner; the Texas Tenors; comedian Grandma Lee; break dancer Hairo Torres; acrobatic basketball dunkers Acrodunk; Recycled Percussion; and runner-up opera singer Barbara Padilla.

Recycled Percussion, which consists of bandleader and drummer Justin Spencer; guitarist Jimmy Magoon; drummer Ryan Vezina; and DJ and vocalist Todd Griffin, got its start at a high school talent show in New Hampshire and gained early success touring on the college circuit. Recycled Percussion came in third place on "America's Got Talent" and Spencer describes the act as "really cool, like a rock show."

In the live show at Planet Hollywood, Recycled Percussion performs a version of The Surfari's "Wipe Out" and what Spencer calls "a cool original track we do on gigantic ladders."

With an industrial sound that encompasses such genres as techno, blues, classic rock and hip hop, the quartet bangs, pounds and makes music on a variety of recycled items, such as trashcans, buckets, barrels and sinks, that seem more suited to the junkyard than the stage.

"I like anytime we use power tools," Spencer says of his favorite non-traditional percussive

instrument. "We use these huge grinders that shoot sparks like 40 feet in the air. ...Our show is very edgy, very cool. It's not just a bunch of guys beating on random things."

The band has a full 90-minute original show they'd like to do in Vegas once *America's Got Talent Live!* ends its run.

"To perform here is a dream come true," Spencer says. "Like being a kid in a candy store."

Another dream came true when opera singer Padilla came in second on "America's Got Talent." Her journey to the TV show and Vegas took place following a battle with Hodgkin's lymphoma as well as the adoption of her daughter, both of which stalled her opera career. But when Mother's Day came around this year, Padilla could no longer fight her passion for performing and decided to audition.

"I had been following the show in the last two seasons," she recalls. "I thought I might do it, but you never think you're going to be chosen. ...I realized the auditions were going to be in Houston so I thought, 'You know what? I am so going to the auditions.'"

And while opera arias might not be on your average American's iPod, Padilla was not surprised that mainstream audiences so willingly embraced her talent.

"[Opera singer] Neal Boyd won last year, so it didn't surprise me," she says, "People have a desire for that kind of music because it's beautiful."

Padilla began singing at a young age, and ultimately went on to get a Master's degree in music from the University of Houston.

"Since I was a little girl I knew I could sing opera, because when my mom drove us to the beach—we were very young, I was probably 6 or 7," she says, "those were the happiest times of my life and my mom was playing opera the whole way...sometimes I would sing along with them. I didn't know what they were saying, of course, but I knew the melody. I would sing operatically and my mom was kind of tickled by that because I could reproduce those sounds."

During the show, audiences will hear Padilla sing "O Mio Babbino Caro"; the duet "All I Ask of You" from *The Phantom of the Opera* with Marcus Collins of the Texas Tenors; and "Somewhere" from *West Side Story*, which she does with the Texas Tenors, as well.

And while she gets to spend her evenings doing what she loves the most, it's not the chance to perform that Padilla values most from her "America's Got Talent" experience.

"[It's] the opportunity to get to so many people and the opportunity to share my story," she says. "I didn't know that was going to happen, but the opportunity to inspire people, help people to recover some faith, some hope, that's priceless."

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