

Maddening talent in Maynooth

By Sarah Sobanski

Many people chose to venture to the Arlington in Maynooth for the first night of their long weekend. For a toonie donation to the food bank they could have a front row seat to Maynooth's Got Talent.

This year, organizer Joey Shulman asked that I be among the judges. There I sat with fourth-year returning *Bancroft Times* Kristena Schutt and karaoke regular Moose FM's Andreas Pandikiu. I quickly realized I was the least experienced. The last time I had been in a talent show was singing Britney Spears in Grade 6.

The first person up onto the stage was a little girl. She had pointed black pencil eyebrows and enough green eye shadow to make me think her Dad, who helped her to the stage, told her she was too young for adult makeup, but she could still make Ziggy Stardust or Lady Gaga proud ? rockstar makeup.

As it turns out, Rihanna was the artist of the day. She sang *Dancing in the Dark*, also known as the catchiest song on the *Home* movie sound track. The 3.5-year-old nailed it. I don't know how she remembered all the words ? I have trouble remembering my grocery list.

Next up was a young man who had the ambition to go after Metallica. You have to be some kind of crazy to fall in step with that insanelly talented band. I have to admit, I was skeptical as he climbed on stage with his acoustic guitar.

The raw voice that came out of him was stunning. Nothing to be worried about. He picked through the song and by the end everyone was smiling.

Both of these performers took home first prize in their age categories. While both talented, they were the only two to show up and compete. I know lots more talented young people in our community that could have rushed that stage and supported an awesome cause. Just a thought, it happens every year. What better memory to take to the first day of school than that you're a superstar? The other kids wouldn't know what to think!

A classically trained violinist started off the older than 21 category. He played Bach, on a fiddle, with his eyes closed! More talent in his thumb than I've got in my entire body. We were off to a great start.

Next up was an a cappella performer who sang a song she wrote herself. She was one of two performers who showed off their song-writing prowess. The song was an ode to her children and being a mother. It was beautiful, oddly contrasting. Both somber and up beat at the same time.

Funny enough, the third singer-song-writer-guitar-player to the stage also performed a song she had written after her children. Her song was inspired after a police officer came to visit her concerning something one of her three boys had been involved in. She went and had a bath after the encounter. In the bath she wrote the folk tune she sang. It was about about choices and a fish that suddenly finds him or herself as a filet on the barbecue.

The second solo singer to the stage with her guitar went after *Crazy* by Gnarls Barkley. It's a cheeky tune but it's quick and the chorus is powerful. You need a good set of pipes to get behind Gnarls Barkley. This woman didn't disappoint. She would later be named the winner of the evening.

A close second place went to a three-piece band ? two old guys and a young woman, to be fun and frank. One played a guitar, the other a harmonica and the woman sang, except she didn't just sing, she blew the crowd away. The three-piece band sang *Jolene* and *Creep*, she sang it better than Dolly Parton and Radiohead. Add two harmonica solos and there just weren't enough prizes to give away. Maybe next year, maybe not ? it all depends if you get out there and show off your stuff at Maynooth's Got Talent.