

Lip Sync contest returns to Shuler Theater in Raton

By Tim Keller For the Comet | Posted: Wednesday, August 13, 2014 12:53 pm

RATON— Lip Sync 2014 promises so much merriment and music making that it's spread across two nights at the Shuler Theater this weekend. The 37th annual community benefit show pits local "performers" in a competition judged partly on synchronized "singing" to classic songs, but especially on the fun factor of costumes and immersion in the part. People who say they'll never get on a stage see this annual show and come back the next year disguised as Elvis Presley or Marilyn Monroe.

"It's a night of laughter and family entertainment," Eileen Gonzales said before last year's show. She started the fundraising event in the 1970s when her mother was diagnosed with diabetes. The event's proceeds provide insulin, blood-sugar monitors and other medical supplies to diabetics throughout the area, stretching from Raton to Clayton to Cimarron to Trinidad. Gonzales lost her mother to diabetes, but the show has lived on.

Two-dozen acts perform Friday night, then do it again Saturday night. The Shuler Theater fills both the auditorium and the balcony both nights. The performers are so deep into their acts that the program names only the performer of the recording, not the actual local people on stage. Thus, when KRTN's Billy Donati defended his 2012 crown last year, he was listed only as "Huey Lewis and the News," accompanied by his fellow deejays.

"The Rondells," an impossibly cute group of four local elementary school girls, won last year's \$200 first prize with their "Leader of the Pack," complete with poodle skirts, a candy store stocked with Twizzlers and a tantalizing bad boy in black. The crowd often roared with cheering and laughter, encouraged by comedic emcees Sean Green and Robi Gonzales.

There's no limit to era or genre. Last year's \$150 second prize went to the Soggy Bottom Boys for their "Man of Constant Sorrow," while third prize went to Miranda Lambert for "Momma's Broken Heart." Sister Sledge, Pink, The Fireballs, Carmen Miranda, the Chile Peppers of New Mexico, and George Jones performed their hits. Elvis sang "Hound Dog." Marilyn Monroe sang "I Never Met a Wolf That Didn't Love to Howl."



Billy D and the KRTN deejays

Billy D defended his Lip Sync 2012 crown last year as Huey Lewis singing "It's Alright," accompanied by his fellow KRTN deejays. This time out, it was only good enough for 5th place.

Gonzales and her family and supporters go door to door signing up sponsors to raise funds to fight diabetes. Last year's list of sponsoring businesses numbered more than 100, filling two pages of small print in the program. There's no overhead—all of the money goes directly to purchasing supplies and equipment for local diabetics.

The sponsors help Gonzales keep the admission price low—just \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for children 12 and under. She says, “I keep the price low because I want everyone to see the Shuler Theater! She's like a beautiful woman: She ages beautifully. Everyone can afford to come to this show. Relatives come to see relatives and neighbors come to see neighbors. Once people come, they keep coming back year after year.”

The complete show runs for two full nights, Friday and Saturday, August 15-16, beginning each evening at 7 p.m. Judges score every performance. After Saturday night's show, they'll tally the scores from both nights to determine the winners, who will be announced on stage after the show.

For further information, contact Eileen Gonzales at (575) 779-3483 or the Shuler Theater at (575) 445-4746.