

Jeans N' Classics good choice for RSO

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It was Jeans N' Classics that wrapped up the Regina Symphony Orchestra's final concert for their Pops 2006-2007 concert series.

Sporting jeans and suit jackets, the RSO had no intention of doing the usual classics -- like Elgar and Liszt -- that one would expect a symphony to play, instead the RSO took on the quintessential songs of Fleetwood Mac, Eurythmics and Kate Bush.

The symphony was backed up by Jeans N' Classics, a band out of London, Ont., that specializes in accompanying and arranging rock music for symphonies. The singers who fronted the band -- Rique Franks and Lis Soderberg -- dressed the part. Soderberg wore black stretch pants with a trench coat and red boots in the style of Eurythmics front woman Annie Lennox. And Franks wore a gothic-style black shirt similar to something Stevie Nicks, who fronted Fleetwood Mac, would wear.

The duo did justice to the covers they sang, singing them exactly how they were sung on the original albums. From Fleetwood Mac's "Rhiannon" to Eurythmics' "Sweet Dream's" to Kate Bush's "Wuthering Heights," Jeans N' Classics covered a lot of ground.

Soderberg and Franks came with a four-man band with Donald Paulton on piano, Mitchell Tyler on bass and Jeff Christmas on drums. Guitarist Peter Brennan also does a lot of the arranging for Jeans N' Classics. He has composed over 1,000 orchestral rock scores.

In addition to Fleetwood Mac, Eurythmics and Kate Bush, the band also has Motown, 80s power ballads and disco in their repertoire. In the future, Victor Sawa, the RSO music director and conductor, wants to bring Jeans N' Classics back to do their Abba concert.

"Wouldn't that be great?" he asked.

Jeans N' Classics kept people's toes tapping Saturday. Franks and Soderberg entertained the audience between songs by re-enacting some of their TV voice work, something they do when not performing

with Jeans N'Classics. Franks is the on-air voice for Showcase Television and Soderberg has been the voice for Air Canada.

In addition to being voice actors, Franks and Soderberg have also been back-up singers.

Franks has sung with Alannah Miles and Glass Tiger. Soderberg has sung with Melanie Doan and Rita MacNeil.

Soderberg, who is originally from Saskatchewan but now lives in Toronto, had a lot of family in the audience, which she pointed out.

The two musicians seemed to have trouble keeping track of the set list throughout the night, mixing up the order of a few songs. They had to be corrected by other members of the band, who were literally on another page.

Other than that, Jeans N' Classics was a fun group to listen to and watch. Their obvious love for what they do made them a pleasure to watch. Jeans N' Classics helped the RSO Pops series close with a bang.