

Actress falls for ‘Patsy Cline’

Country crooner: Kittra Coomer steps into singer’s shoes

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“I’ve always been a fan of Patsy Cline,” said Kittra Coomer, who’s playing the legendary country singer in “Always ... Patsy Cline” at Capital Playhouse.

“I don’t remember a time when I didn’t know the sound of her voice and know who she was. She was always around.”

Coomer of Las Vegas isn’t new to portraying Cline: She played the same role in Spokane in 2003 and talked to Playhouse interim artistic director Troy Arnold Fisher about reprising the part here.



“I told Troy I wanted to do it again before I got too old — while it was still believable to do it again,” said Coomer, who grew up at Lake Tapps. “It’s by far my favorite show that I’ve ever done. There are just two women on stage, and that’s rare.”

Coomer has been seen in several Capital Playhouse shows in recent years and is best known for the roles of Rosie in national touring productions of the ABBA-themed “Mamma Mia” and Earth Mother in “Menopause: The Musical.”

“I’ve done them over and over for a long period of time,” she said. “I’m lucky like that. Usually, an actor will work for six weeks at a time here and there, but I’ve been able to do those shows consistently over a number of years.”

Coomer loves how “Always ... Patsy Cline” focuses on the relationship between Cline and Houston housewife Louise Seger (played by Capital Playhouse regular Stephanie Nace), a fan who became a good friend. The relationship lasted until Cline died in a plane crash in 1963 at the age of 30.

“It’s such an endearing real story,” Coomer said. “Sometimes with celebrities, you forget that they are real people and have actual real relationships and real lives besides what you see on stage. What I love about this show is that it shows both sides of that.”

The show calls for Coomer to sing 27 of Cline’s songs, including “I Fall to Pieces” and “Walkin’ After Midnight.”

“I would never dare to say I sound like her,” the actress said. “She had one of those one-of-a-kind voices. But there are certain phrasings and patterns in her voice that I do a good job of trying to replicate.”

In the show, Cline “erupts into full song even in heartfelt late-night conversation at Louise’s modest home, where she helps fix bacon and eggs just like regular folks,” Ben Brantley wrote in his 1997 New York Times review of “Always.” “Sample segue: When

Louise says it's crazy raising two kids on her own, Patsy obligingly responds with a rendition of 'Crazy.' ”

“You would be surprised if you see the show. There are more songs that you know than you'd realize,” Coomer said. “She was very prolific in that short period.” ‘Always ... Patsy Cline’

What: This two-woman musical revue is based on the true story of country singer Patsy Cline's friendship with housewife Louise Seger.

When: 7:30 p.m. today and Saturday plus Oct. 5-8, 12-15 and 20-22; matinees at 2 p.m. Sunday and Oct. 9, 16 and 23

Where: Capital Playhouse: 612 Fourth Ave. E., Olympia

Tickets: \$35-\$39 for adults, \$30-\$34 for seniors (60 and older) and youths (16 and younger)

More information: 360-943-2744, capitalplayhouse.com