

# Jazz 'Diva' Brings Stories, Music to the Barn

By Francis Baker  
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Elizabeth Shepherd brought her trio and some stories to the Gambrel Barn last week.

"I like to talk – I hope you don't mind," was one of her first comments. Musicians who like to talk can be deadly – not so with Shepherd, who sprinkled her two-hour concert with anecdotes about her life and music at just the right proportion to add another dimension to the music.

So the audience learned she'd spent seven years as a waitress while going through music school, laughed a little about her Juno-nominated first album, and learned some of her latest album Parkdale was inspired by people she knew in the Toronto neighbourhood.

The music was good, too – with a sprinkling of different styles and rhythms to keep things interesting and highlight the virtuosity of bassist Scott Kemp and drummer Colin Kingsmore. Kingsmore was particularly impressive, mixing swing rhythms with rock'n'roll styles.

Shepherd herself is by turns romantic, soulful, and vibrant in lyrics and music, and a great entertainer. She was the second of three shows in the "Starlight Divas" series, highlighting new female jazz pianists – this Thursday, Sophia Perlman and the Vipers move in the Gambrel Barn. The "Starlight" series used to be under the stars outside – until Perlman's show last year was rained out.

This year's festival has had to cope with one tough rain day – the July 19 Hot Fusion show needed some quick work by volunteers with mops and squeegees to clear the barn after an evening storm.

Last week, the 29<sup>th</sup> Elora Festival continued with Vaughan Williams' London Thursday night at Knox Church, the choir of Trinity College Cambridge highlighting Friday in the barn, and singer-songwriter Ron Sexsmith coming in Saturday night.

On Sunday afternoon the Trinity College choir teamed with the Elora Festival Singers for a showpiece concert in the barn.

The festival wraps up this weekend, with a great and varied lineup for the last few days. The last Vaughan Williams celebration concert, featuring vocal music, runs Thursday, Destino and Broadway Bound – showtunes by the Elora Festival Singers – runs Friday, and Japanese-style drumming group Nagata Shachu highlights Saturday night in the barn. The festival finishes with the Elora Festival Singers' Hymn Tasting Sunday afternoon at St. John's Church.