



Face to Face with Gene Watson

AMERICAN country singing legend Gene Watson will perform at the Iontas Theatre in Castleblayney on Sunday October 14 with his Farewell Party Band. His career has spanned three decades and has earned him fans right across the world. Here he talks to the Monaghan Post about the highs and the lows and tells why both himself and his band are looking forward to coming to Ireland.

What sparked your interest in country music?

I've been into music ever since I can remember. I grew up listening to Gospel music through going to church and that helped my interest grow.

Who or what were your influences?

I had several, back when I was a kid I listened to all the artists who were popular at the time.

What do you think of other country musicians out there at the moment, for example, Willie Nelson?

Well there are several out there today that I really enjoy listening to such as Alan Jackson and Joe Nicholls. The difference with country music today however is that it is much more fabricated now than it was when I was starting out. There doesn't seem to be as much talent as there should be because you can do all these things to a person's voice in a studio to make it seem like they really can sing.

Are you looking forward to the concert in Monaghan?

Oh yes, we've had so much success in Ireland. The guys in the band are really looking forward to it. Hats off to everybody in Ireland, you all are so warm and welcoming.

If you weren't a singer, what do you think you would be?

I'd still be working on cars as a paint and body man.

Do you think it's important to be able to read music or is it mostly learned from listening?

I can't read music myself; I learned everything I know by listening. I know what I want a song to sound like and I hear it in my mind before I record it in a studio.

How do you like to relax in your spare time?

I like to watch TV; I'm a big TV buff. I also enjoy playing golf although when I do have time off I like nothing more than to kick back in my recliner. I haven't had that much time off this year and it's not looking like I will have much off for the next while.

What has been your biggest achievement to date?

I hope I haven't reached it yet. I've had so many good things happen in my life it's hard to pinpoint one. A goal of mine would be to get a gold record, I believe that everybody needs to set goals and work towards achieving them.

Do you have any regrets?

Not really. I started out with no experience and it's with a lot of luck that I am where I am today. I didn't get much help from other artists but when you learn from experience it's something you hang on to and never forget.

You are coming up on five years of being cancer free. Has it changed your outlook on life?

Yeah, it really opens your eyes to a lot of things. I'm a survivor and having cancer makes you take life more seriously if that's possible. You realise the fragility of life.

Have you any advice for up and coming young artists wishing to follow in your footsteps?

Always try to be readily available and most importantly be appreciative towards your fans as they make you who you are.

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