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TREVOR TUNES: JOSH PINEDA AND LEANNA CRAWFORD

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By Trevor Wood

Photo credit Garrett Parker



Trevor Tunes is a regular Talon series by columnist Trevor Wood that highlights musicians at Northwest University, with the intent of sharing the stories behind their songs, inspirations, and musical journeys.

When I walked into the small one-room church Friday evening, the place was already packed. A jazzy guitar and a warbling voice drifted over the sound of people chatting happily at their tables about work, family, and the Seahawks. Many people stood against the sidewalls of the room and watched silently, enjoying the warm, cozy buzz of the room not unlike the way their neighbors were enjoying their warm cups of free coffee.

Several artists were scheduled to play throughout the evening, but I had come to hear two of them in particular: Josh Pineda and Leanna Crawford. Both are juniors at Northwest University in the music industry business program. Both Leanna and Josh put on beautiful performances during their time on stage with a mixture of covers and original songs.

Josh's set started with a soft, bluesy cover of *La Vie en Rose* which was accompanied by a fellow artist named Jessica Ghyvoronsky. He later sang an original song about love lost and the lingering questions of what could have been with an old friend. "Don't worry," he assured the crowd with a smile and a wink, "I'm over it now!"

Later, when Leanna took the stage with an acoustic guitar on her right and a thumping cajón on her left, she started her set with a cover of OneRepublic's *Counting Stars*, a song that showcased Crawford's powerful voice and stage presence. She showed her musical ability throughout the set, pulling out a ukulele for one of her original songs titled *My Lullaby*, a happy tune that had the audience smiling and bobbing heads with the beat in no time.

In the following week, I had the opportunity to sit down with both Josh and Leanna to talk about their journeys as musicians. I was expecting to hear stories about middle school voice lessons and high school marching bands. However, as I started to dig into their backgrounds, I quickly learned that these artists had incredible musical stories.

"I grew up with the Jonas Brothers...literally," revealed Josh when describing his musical childhood. "When they hit it big, it was like, 'Of course they made it big...they're our friends!'"

When I asked about his first performance, he smiled. "I was 13...we were at this big church-school local area talent show and I had this mini band together. We were a punk rock band called the Kingdom Dreamers," he chuckled. "We did punk rock songs...that was when I knew I wanted to perform."

Josh also shared about his post-high school music experience, mentioning a band he formed to play at Northwest Unplugged last year.

"We were called '10:01PM'..." he said with a coy smile, "Because curfew is at 10:00! Yeah, we were bad boys..."

Leanna, on the other hand, started her music career slightly later in life, writing her first song when she was 15. However, her musical career got a kick-start in 2013 when she entered an original song in the Music Search Contest of the radio station Praise 106.5 and

won, which eventually led to her to open at performances for Jars of Clay and Audio Adrenaline.

On top of that, Leanna went to a worship songwriting conference in May 2016, where she got to meet Matthew West, Contemporary Christian Music singer and songwriter.

"He asked if I could send him my songs, and we kept talking throughout the weekend," Leanna said. "He's super down to earth, one of the most humble guys I've ever met."

West has since come alongside Leanna as a mentor of sorts, guiding her into a contract with Combustion Music where she will get to work with him as a songwriter.

Although both Leanna and Josh had very different journeys, there is one aspect they share: their reason to sing. Both artists talked about how being a musician gives them an opportunity to connect with audiences and let them know that God loves them.

Josh's advice for any artist is to remember that when you're making music, "you're creating something beautiful as an offering to God... forget what people think about you and build something for God."

Leanna had a similar stance. "Music is how I worship God," she said. "Writing and singing, even if it's not a song about Him, I think, can still be worship."

If you would like to hear any of Josh Pineda's music, check out his channel "Josh Pineda Music" on YouTube or SoundCloud. Also, if you would like to see him perform, there will be a free concert at Butterfield Chapel on Saturday, October 15th at 8pm that he and several other performers are putting on. Please bring your friends as the performers need to fill the chapel in order to make the event happen again in the future! For updates on future performances, check out his Facebook page, "Josh Pineda Music."

If you would like to hear any of Leanna Crawford's music, you can find her on Spotify, iTunes, or YouTube under "Leanna Crawford." Stay tuned for new music in the spring!

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