



Carrie Underwood performs "All-American Girl" at the Ryan Center last Thursday night. Photo by Caitlin Downing

Country star rocks the Ryan Center

By Adrienne Downing

The term crossover music usually means a song translates easily from one music genre to another. In the case of Carrie Underwood, her music not only transcends musical tastes, but age gaps and genders as well.

The country star, who gained fame as the 2005 winner of American Idol, entertained a near-capacity crowd last Thursday at the Ryan Center on the University of Rhode Island campus that included 5-year-olds and octogenarians and nearly every age in between.

The reason Underwood is popular across so many lines is because people can relate to her and her lyrics.

"There are two types of guys here tonight. The ones that were dragged here by their significant other and the ones that want to be here. Don't worry guys, either way you are getting some serious brownie points," Underwood said to the men in the crowd before launching into "The More

Boys I Meet."

Despite the fact that Underwood sang about liking her dog more than the boys she meets did not stop the guys in the audience from singing along.

The 30-somethings in the crowd were taken back a few years by her gutsy rendition of Guns 'n Roses "Paradise City" and a 9-year-old girl even got in on the action when she was called onstage to sing along during "All-American Girl."

There are some great things about living in a small state and one of them is attending a concert at a venue small enough to feel like the entertainer is having a personal conversation with everyone in the arena. Several times during the evening Underwood stopped to talk with, not at, the audience. When she paused mid-sentence while talking about her


American Idol days and quipped, "I'm talking too fast, aren't I?" the crowd nodded and answered "yes" just like the question was directed to them personally.

That's the beauty of live shows, especially when the musician is as personable as Underwood. The "pull up a stool, let's chat awhile before we play another song" feel can't be duplicated on an MP3 player or the radio.

And, although she has become a big star over the last three years, she is still small town enough to rock Little Rhody because, after all, she "Ain't in Checotah Anymore."


Underwood can be seen hosting the CMA awards show with another recent Rhode Island visitor, Brad Paisley, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

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