

12-year-old Louisa Barbosa crowned Aurora's Teen Idol



By Brock Weir

When The Auroran caught up with Louisa Barbosa last summer, she quickly cautioned that her musical taste was probably not what one would expect of an eleven-year-old. But, a lot can happen in a year.

Now 12, Louisa hit the stage on Canada Day ? armed with little more than an Ed Sheeran hit ? and the confidence to sell it to the crowd.

Her rendition of Sheeran's ?Photograph? was just enough to secure her the crown ? well, the red and white sash ? of Aurora's 2015 Teen Idol.

Louisa, a student at Holy Spirit Catholic Elementary School, was visibly excited as she was called up on stage, her name announced by Mayor Geoff Dawe.

?I don't usually do these competitions to win!? Louisa exclaimed, speaking to The Auroran after her win, her hands still trembling with excitement. ?I do them for the experience and things like that because I want to develop as a musician. This was just a huge up. I feel so happy and I am so grateful.?

It was a long afternoon for the performers as the top seven in the annual competition performed for the Canada Day crowds. Carefully watched by judges ? performer and director Renee Salewski and Philip Trow, co-founder of Opera York ? the top seven was whittled down to a top four, who then had one final chance to wow the crowd.

?It is a balance between their ability to own their space and sell their song, so to speak, and their ability to communicate the song, and just the quality and tonality of their voice,? said Ms. Salewski on what she was looking for in performers. ?It is all about how balanced their voices are. A couple of the competitors who actually didn't win probably had more balance and better techniques than others, but just didn't have the same stage presence yet.?

Louisa, however, had that stage presence in spades, she added.

?It is about really owning your space and your time and not feeling apologetic for being there,? she said.

As a singer, Louisa first really captured public attention when she was selected to take part in the Rising Stars competition held during the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). Then, her rendition of Adele's ?Crazy for You? secured her place and she's looking

forward to showing off her talent at the CNE next month once again. Now that she's Aurora's Teen Idol, however, her dance card is bound to fill up fast as she will undoubtedly be called upon to show off her vocal prowess at a multitude of municipal events and celebrations over the year ahead.

Now that she is 12, this was her first year eligible for the competition and her mother, Margarida, encouraged her to give it a whirl.

?She is always so supportive,? says Louisa. ?[Over the next year] I want to keep developing and enjoy myself. I am looking forward to being able to sing the National Anthem. It is just about doing my best, enjoying myself, and gaining experience ? and that is really why I do it.

?I do try to give myself as much performing experience as I possibly can and jump at every chance I get. This time, I really wanted the judges to see a little bit more of me. I worked a lot on my stage presence and I think that really helped. It is about making sure to engage the crowd, making sure you look people in the eyes, and never shy away because it is not as engaging.?

A winning formula!