

16-year-old Olivia Zarboni crowned 2017 Aurora Teen Idol



By Brock Weir

Judges were looking for stage presence, a beautiful voice, and unapologetically taking their moment, and 16-year-old Olivia Zarboni delivered, taking home the crown and the sash as Aurora's 2017 Teen Idol.

Olivia, who will be entering Grade 11 at ESC Renaissance this September, wowed the crowd with her passionate performance of "Faithfully" by Journey.

After an audition round in early June, the Top 8 finalists were in the zone for the Town's Canada Day Celebrations at Lambert Willson Park on Saturday evening preparing to wow the crowds of judges, dignitaries, enthusiastic, screaming fans and music lovers alike.

Making the Top 8 were, in order of performance: Kahlan Crowe, who sang Queen's "The Show Must Go On"; Stephanie Imseis, who sang "The One Who Got Away" by Katy Perry; Stephane Arcand with Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive"; Emma Spector with "The Audition", one of the popular tracks from the Oscar-winning film *La La Land*; Nikita Riou with "Think of Me" from *Phantom of the Opera*; Taylor Lindsay with "I Dreamed A Dream" from *Les Miserables*; and Jaclyn Fearnley with Christina Aguilera's "Bound to You". "We're looking for some beautiful voices, great stage presence and a commitment to what they are singing," said judge Briar Boake ahead of the performance. "And not apologizing for being there - owning the stage and taking that moment to sing."

Fellow judge Renee Salewski said she agreed, noting, "It is essentially that level of confidence and commitment to what they are up to; not just the song itself, but commitment to their choices and just a sense of honesty."

Having taken part in the preliminary round, judge Philip Troth knew they had a difficult task ahead of them, and said the hardest part of the whole thing was that only one singer could win.

"It takes a bunch of cajones to get up there and do this!" he said.

In the end, it came down to five: Stephane, Nikita, Jaclyn, runner-up Kahlan and winner Olivia.

"I couldn't process it at first," said Olivia of her big win. "I am really happy and I am really lucky to be here."

Having entered the competition with "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" by Poison, Olivia said she has a penchant for classic rock because she feels it suits her range and, perhaps more importantly, they are more "interesting songs to sing."

"I auditioned two years ago [for Teen Idol] but I didn't get in," she explained. "Competition isn't my favorite thing in the world. It makes me nervous sometimes, but my mom encouraged me to try out this year and my singing teacher also encouraged me to try out. [Through this experience] I hope to get more experience and opportunities."