

Aurora Teen Idol eager to share passion for performing arts



Scarlett Lau has long had a passion for the performing arts and she will be able to share that passion with more people than ever before as 2026's Aurora Teen Idol.

Lau was crowned Aurora Teen Idol on Saturday afternoon at the culmination of this year's Aurora Performing Arts Festival, co-hosted at Aurora Town Square by the Town and Marquee Theatrical Productions.

The Davide De Simone Performance Hall was packed on June 13 as nearly two dozen youth performers from across York Region, specializing in acting, dance, and vocals found their place in the spotlight with honours going to:

Junior Vocalist ? Nick Motahari Intermediate Vocalist ? Jessica Tang Intermediate Dance ? Jai Thomas Senior Acting ? Sophia Brophy Senior Dance ? Valerie Li

Senior Vocals ? Ciaro Lee (1st Runner Up)

Senior Vocals ? Scarlett Lau (1st Place, Aurora Teen Idol)

"I've really been inspired by the experience, getting to watch everybody else and seeing all the amazing talent here," said Lau, a Grade 10 student and resident of Markham. "I'm really grateful for the opportunity to share my passion for the performing arts with everybody."

Lau clinched the win with her rendition of "Screw Loose," a tune from the Broadway musical Cry-Baby, based on the 1990 John Waters film of the same name. She says she chose the song because it "showcases my strong suit" which is belting and singing, and it's a really fun song to sing.

A dance student at Unionville High School, Lau says she's been dancing since she was two-years-old and singing since she was six, and the student at Harriet Chung Performing Arts notes, "I think being involved in the musical theatre and competitive dance has really helped me to get where I am today."

"I'm so grateful for everybody who has helped me on that journey," she said.

Lau has her eyes set on a career in musical theatre, and would love to tread the boards for Mirvish, the Broadway stage, and even get some experience as a musical theatre performer on cruise ships with dream roles being Eliza from "Hamilton" and Eponine in "Les Misérables."

As Aurora's 2026 Teen Idol, there will be plenty of chances to gain that experience Lau as a performer as she will be invited to perform at a several municipal events over the next 12 months ? including Concerts in the Park and Ribfest ? and the Top 8 performers in the Senior Vocal category will have the chance to show off their chops at the summer concert series as well.

Following Saturday's performances, Marquee's Sheryl Thomas says she was wowed by what she heard while keeping the show going backstage.

?I was saying to the senior vocalists they were all nothing but powerhouses, every single one of them,? said Thomas. ?I said to them, ?Can you imagine if all eight of you got together and sang us something?' That would be incredible and really powerful.?

?We were so well attended this year, which is beautiful to see, because they deserve all the support after all of that work,? Thomas continued. ?The value of [programs like this] is beyond measure, in my opinion, because it just hits on so many levels. It hits, of course, to the performer, to their families and to the general public who come to see it in an enriching show. It teaches youth that were participating to cheer for each other. They were all encouraging each other and that's exactly what we need. We need to make sure that everybody's being supportive and that's the environment that creates beautiful, great art.

?I can't wait till next year. I'm hoping that we're going to have more mini-performers, six and under. We didn't have any mini competitors this year so we're hoping to get a few of those so we have representation in every category and I want to still stress that acting is still underrepresented. We would love to have some more actors bring something to the table.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter