

Holy Spirit student uses voice to wow judges in CNE's Rising Stars contest



By Brock Weir

"My taste is not what you would expect from an 11-year-old," says Aurora's Louisa Barbosa, as she settles into a seat in her bright living room with a guitar behind her.

While the guitar rests silent behind her, to her left is a keyboard with another guitar nearby. It is clear this is a house of music. "There is Guns N Roses, Iron Maiden, Elton John, Eric Clapton ?? she continues.

"Yeah, it's my fault," interjects her father, Fabio. "It's all the old stuff."

Although Louisa's tastes might skew towards the classics, she picked a decidedly modern artist as an inspiration when she auditioned to take part on the Rising Stars competition which will be held later this month at the CNE.

Evidently her rendition of Adele's "Crazy for You" did the trick, and she will be up on stage on August 18, showing off her voice in the talent competition which has attracted up and coming artists from far and wide.

"I saw a poster on a billboard at my school and I decided to look up the website, and my mom said, 'Hey, you should enter,' so I did," says the student at Holy Spirit Catholic Elementary School, who is preparing to enter Grade 6 this September. "I do play guitar, but I have only been playing for about two years. I have been enjoying it, but I want to focus on singing first and slowly, as I get better, bring it into my career."

After logging onto the website, it was a team effort to get things done with Louisa and her mother, Margarida, looking for the best backdrop to film her video audition, getting the video just right, and then facing an uphill battle to get the actual audition uploaded. It was all worth the effort, however, and it might be a long time coming.

"Singing has always been a big part of my life," Louisa explains. "I have been doing it for my whole life, but when I was six I really wanted to be good and wanted to have a career out of it."

At that age, one of her early influences was Hannah Montana but, she says, those tastes don't extend to what she describes as "Pixie Cut Miley."

"I just liked her attitude," she says of Miley Cyrus' alter-ego. "I liked the fun nature of it and even now I like listening to some of her more country tracks that she did a whole while back and they are really pretty."

Fast-forward five years and she sees some similarities to Adele in what she is trying to do. She has an affinity for the blues, songs

that are on the slower side and not necessarily 'pop-ish.' Singing, she says, gives her confidence and that is a trait her parents have noticed as well.

'She is most comfortable when she sings,' says Margarida. 'Off the stage she seems a little bit shy, but when you give her a microphone and a guitar, she has got it all! Guitar is almost part of the decoration in this house right now. It's everywhere. Every half hour we have a song playing in the house with her singing and playing and it has been fun.'

At the moment, however, Louisa is primarily focused on the August 18 rounds where she is 'noodling' Adele's 'Don't You Remember' and Birdy's 'Skinny Love' as her songs of choice.

'I am definitely going to try my best, obviously, and pick songs I think will showcase who I am, how I sing, and hopefully everyone will enjoy it,' she says. 'I just want the judges to like what I do when I perform and like my energy. I want them to like my voice and like me in general. I hope they enjoy it!'

For more information on the Rising Star competition, visit tinyurl.com/risingstar-CNE.