

## King's Marissa Forte is Aurora's 2025 Teen Idol



Marissa Forte, a Grade 11 student at King City Secondary School, was crowned Aurora's 2025 Teen Idol after a stellar performance at the Aurora Performing Arts Festival on Saturday morning.

Held at the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall and co-hosted by the Town of Aurora and Marquee Theatrical Productions, the Performing Arts Festival saw youth contestants from kindergarten students through Grade 12, face off in a singing, dancing, and dramatic categories, with the winner of the Senior Vocal Category winning Teen Idol Honours.

Forte wowed the crowds with her rendition of "Bring Me to Life" by Evanescence.

"I didn't think it was my best performance, so I wasn't sure if I was going to win, but I am very, very surprised because everyone else is so amazing," said Forte. "I am very proud of myself and I'm also proud of everyone else who performed. I'm just really excited!"

First runner up in the Senior Vocal category and in the Aurora Teen Idol stakes was Nathan Fiscaletti, a Grade 11 student at Pickering College, whose rendition of "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables" from Les Miserables really stood out to judges. Fiscaletti also took home top honours in the Senior Acting Category with an evocative monologue.

This year's competition was judged by actress/vocalist Erica Santillana, Theatre Aurora President Neill Kernohan, and vocalist Ysi Cattle, herself a former Aurora Teen Idol.

### WINNERS:

Junior Dance: Kari Lee

Mini-Vocal: Nick Motahari

Junior Vocal: Jessica Tang

Intermediate Dance: Charlotte Danson

Intermediate Vocal: Eleanor Shickluna

Senior Acting Category: Nathan Fiscaletti

Senior Dance: Rosanna Zhang

Senior Vocal: Marissa Forte

Eight semi-finalists were selected to vie for the top prize, but when three came down ill before the Festival itself, it was down to a top five of: Zoe Verhofstadt, 13, with ABBA's 'Slipping Through My Fingers'; Grade 8 student Benjamin Davidoff with Stevie Wonder's 'Overjoy'; 16-year-old Emma Gamley with 'Not for the Life of Me' from Thoroughly Modern Millie; along with Forte and FIscaletti.

'I've always loved singing,' said Forte. 'My grandfather is a singer; he sings in Spanish a bunch, so I took that and I've been singing since I was a kid. And then I recently started theatre. I do gravitate more towards musical theatre, but I do also like Evanescence and pop-rock because I think it fits my voice.'

That was a view shared by Sheryl Thomas, founder of Marquee Theatrical Productions who said Forte demonstrated 'phenomenal power' in her voice.

'Holy smoke!?' she said when asked for a capsule review of Forte's performance. 'The runner-up also had an incredibly passionate performance, and both are well-deserving. It was a hard decision, though; I mean, there was some great, great talent in that category all together, as there always seems to be. They're semi-finalists for a reason, so their expertise is at a certain level already.'

All of the Top 8 in the Senior Vocal category will have the chance to perform at upcoming Town events, including the upcoming Concerts in the Park Summer Series that launches at Town Park on Wednesday, July 2, at 7 p.m.

**By Brock Weir**