

Get ready for a lot more of Samantha Ryan



By Brock Weir

From Janis Joplin to Lil Wayne, there was something for everyone during Canada Day weekend in Aurora's search for its next Teen Idol.

But amid Broadway belters and songsters putting a different spin on today's Top 40, classic rock eventually won the day.

The ultimate winner was Samantha Ryan, and as she looked ahead to her duties this year, her focus was firmly set on performing at this week's Ribfest.

Hosted by 2012's Teen Idol Taylor Mansillo crowds of people and judges alike gathered at Lambert Willson Park for the Canada Day celebrations to cheer on their friends, family, and neighbours, in their quest for the teen title.

Evidently, it was no easy task as judges took their time narrowing contestants down to a top four, but whittle they did. In the end, Sydney Nicholson, Jessica Koerge, Samantha Ryan, and Alexi Moumounais rose to the top.

But having wowed the crowd earlier, channelling Janis Joplin in "Me and Bobby McGee", and revisiting the roots of rock in her second performance, Samantha Ryan was crowned Aurora's 2013 Teen Idol, with Alexi as second runner up.

"I personally don't think I did as well as I could," Samantha, surprised by her win, told The Auroran.

"I thought all the competitors were amazing and thought all that mattered was I was in the Top 4. At least I was in the Top 4. When I found out I won, my jaw dropped. I looked at everyone and I couldn't believe it."

Samantha said she has always had aspirations to be a singer and through competitions like Aurora Teen Idol, the more experience she gets under her belt, the better and more comfortable she gets performing in public.

Having studied at an arts school in Thornhill for music theory, she came back to St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School last year, where she begins Grade 10 this week.

She continues to sing through her school, and has also performed at local benefits and, essentially, any opportunity which came her own way.

"I am interested in music and I think it is the one thing I can express to people the best," she said of her song selections, which although might have been older, still had a broad appeal. "People had to know the songs."

A lot of the ones I listen to are classic rock, and I picked the songs that I am most comfortable with and that a lot of people know. I

just find it easier to for me to tell the story behind them.

?A lot of the songs performed were love songs, but ?Me and Bobby McGee' has a lot of turns in it which make it interesting. Another reason I chose it is because my grandfather loves the song. He always wants me to sing it and he thinks I sound amazing when I sing it so I always sing it for him.?

With a busy year ahead of her singing at various Town functions and events, she was excited one personal favourite was on her calendar.

?I'm excited for everything, but particularly Ribfest,? she said. ?It's one of my favourite things Aurora does.?

Ribfest gets underway at Machell Park this Friday, September 6, running through Sunday. In addition to Samantha, entertainment will include The Mud Men and Honeymoon Suite. Samatha will perform Saturday between 2.15 and 3.15 p.m.