This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Sat Oct 31 18:50:32 2026 / +0000 GMT

Rising Star: Shelburne youth ready to take the stage at CNE

Written By **Joshua Drakes**

Nasia Castillo of Shelburne has been preparing to show her talents and take the stage at the Canadian National Exhibition's Rising Star Competition.

Rising Star is a national competition for singers, dancers and musicians, with monetary prizes up for grabs.

?I'm a little bit nervous about it, because there's a lot more people and judges and a lot more performers,? she said. ?But I'm really excited and happy about it.?

Castillo, a 13-year-old Canadian-Filipino singer, was born in Brampton before moving to Shelburne at age four and has called the town home ever since.

She began to pick up on music at a very young age. From age two, she was memorizing and reciting nursery rhymes for her parents, who encouraged her to develop her musical skills. She said this was a gift that she inherited from her father.

?I picked it up more for my dad, because he was a singer,? she said. ?And my dad would also record me. And sometimes my dad would show me and he would say to me, ?look at you when you were two years old,'?

Even by such a young age, Castillo was already being trained by a vocal coach, and made her debut at age six, singing at a 16th birthday party.

This passion would explode into other performing arts, far beyond just singing.

May Castillo, Nasia's mother, said that from a young age, Nasia's father and herself would offer new things for Castillo to try, and she would eagerly take them on.

?We would ask Nasia if she would want to do ?this', or if ?this' is something she would enjoy,? she said. ?She would just say, yes. She would just practice and practice and show enthusiasm.?

?She joined multiple Performing Arts where she had trained in vocals, dancing and acting. She did some modelling also. And all that brought her to where she is, right now,? May Castillo added.

It brought her to the CNE, where she first took an interest in the CNE Rising Star competition because of the unique challenge it brings.

?I wanted to challenge myself,? Castillo said. ?Because a lot of other people from my performing arts studio, JDL Performing Arts, were joining it. So I decided to experience it for myself and to see if I could even place.?

For Castillo, her favourite part of the arts is just getting up on stage and going for it.

?My favorite part of singing is just performing in front of people,? she said. ?Because I'm really happy, and I get to express my emotions with all the songs, and I get to walk around on stage.?

However, everyone has their challenges, and for Castillo, it's adapting to last-minute performances and ensuring she doesn't freeze up on stage.

?There were some performances that would be last minute, and I would have to practice quickly,? she said, ?On stage, you could blank out multiple times, but you always learn from those mistakes, and I always overcome it.?

Castillo's advice to anyone else that's hitting the stage is simple.

?At the end of the day, you just do your job, and what you came to do,? she said. ?Just fake it ?till you make it. Whoever has a dream, just go for it. Don't let anybody else's opinions put you down.?

This is the advice that has taken Castillo through an already lengthy career. Competitively, she already had her first win in 2016, being crowned Little Miss Vaughn.

She would continue to win, earning Miss Charity 2018, and has continued to participate in other competitions such as Discovery Spotlight 2019, WCCOPA 2020, TKFW 2021, Canada Center Stage 2023, Long & McQuade Singing Competition 2024, and now CNE Rising Star.

The competition runs from Aug. 16 to Sept. 1 and is hosted at the Enercare Center (100 Princes' Blvd #1, Toronto).