

BARBRALICA

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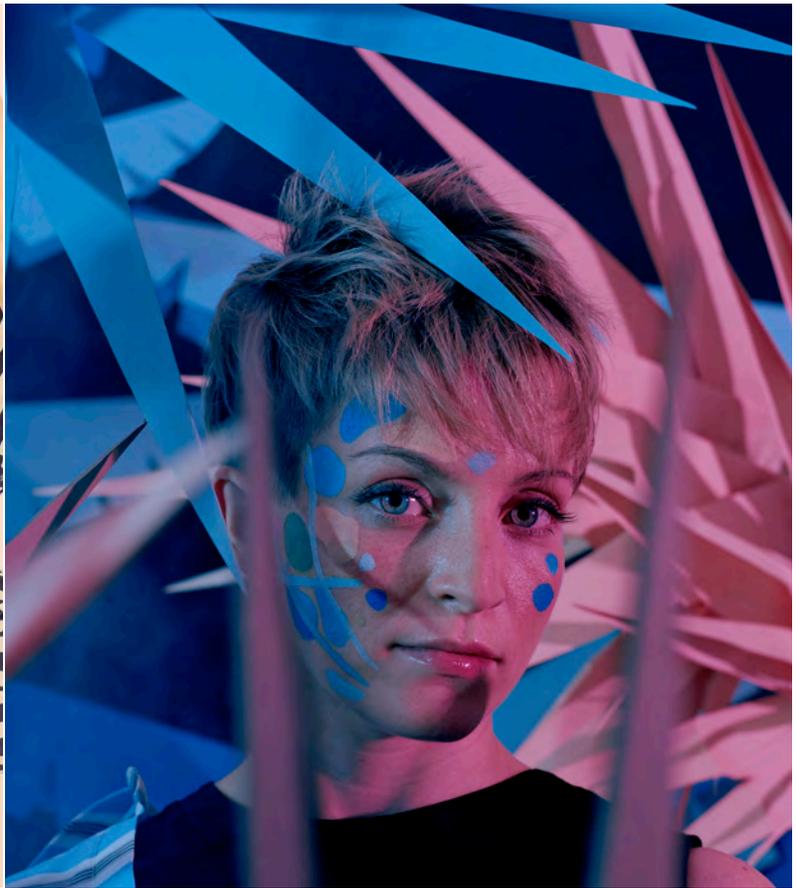
UPDATED: OCTOBER 2018



BIOGRAPHY

Juno-nominated artist Barbra Lica is fast rising Canadian vocalist and songwriter and has been receiving accolades for a unique approach that stresses subtlety, grace and storytelling. Based in Toronto, Barbra's live show captivates audiences all over North America with her genuine warmth and confident stage presence. A seasoned act on the Canadian and American club and festival circuits, Barbra Lica has performed everywhere from New York City's legendary **Birdland** to Toronto's prestigious **Koerner Hall**. She has also headlined at festivals across the continent including **Festival International de Jazz de Montréal**, **Vancouver International Jazz Festival** and **Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival**, and opened for the likes of **Christian McBride**, **Pat Metheny**, **Bob Dorough**, and **Terence Blanchard**.

Barbra's debut album *That's What I Do* (**Triplet / Universal Jazz Japan**) was released to widespread acclaim in 2012, ranking her in **Canada's Top 5 Jazz singers on the CBC**, as well **Top 5 up-and-coming Toronto jazz artists on blogTO**. Her band made their Japanese debut live at the **Tokyo International Jazz Festival** in 2015 for over 1000 audience members. Her first album with **Justin Time Records**, *I'm Still Learning*, was released September 2016 and subsequently **nominated for a 2017 Juno Award** in the category of "Best Vocal Jazz Album". Barbra is currently promoting her newest project entitled, *You're Fine* (Justin Time Records, November 2018). This album is a collaborative effort between Toronto and Nashville-based musicians, seamlessly blending jazz, country and folk influences. It includes Barbra's touring band of up-and-coming musicians from across Canada with special guests and country music legends, **Paul Franklin** (Vince Gill, Shania Twain, Toby Keith) on pedal steel guitar and multi-instrumentalist **Wanda Vick Burchfield** (Taylor Swift, Trisha Yearwood, Jason Aldean). "You're Fine" was recorded at **Addiction Sound Studios** in the heart of Nashville with award-winning Canadian engineer **David Kalmusky** (John Oates, Journey) and highly-respected Canadian producer/bassist **Marc Rogers** (The Philosopher Kings, Nikki Yanofsky). This is Barbra's most ambitious and personal offering to date – it promises to break all the rules while searching for commonalities between musical genres, human experiences and two sides of one border.



BARBRALICA



WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT BARBRA:

“Lica smiles when she sings. You can hear it. When you see her in concert, you’ll see it too. In a word, refreshing”

- Tim Tamashiro, Host, CBC Radio

“Ella a tout pour réussir.”

- François Lemay, ICI Musique

“Barbra Lica’s voice is infectious.”

- Greg Wells, Music Producer

“It starts and ends with Lica’s voice. It’s a bright, vibrant contralto one minute, laconic and syrupy the next when she lets a phrase die on the vine and trail off”

- Frank De Blase, Journalist, City Newspaper

“With her upbeat lilt and vocal cuteness on covers and originals, Lica offers smiles and sympathy, not blues”

- Brad Wheeler, Journalist, The Globe and Mail



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ACCOMPLISHMENTS AWARDS ACCOLADES

Called one of Canada's Top 5 Female Jazz Singers, Top 35 under 35 Jazz Artists by CBC Radio 2

Described as one of Toronto's top 5 up-and-coming jazz artists on popular site, blogTO.

2018

Released "You're Fine" with Justin Time Records (Fontana North/Universal)

Headliner at Montréal International Jazz Festival – Scène Rio Tinto

Northern Ontario Block Concert Tour

Mainstage performances at Festival on the Green (Vermont), Northeast Wine and Jazz Festival (New York), Markham Jazz Festival (Ontario), Ottawa Winter Jazz Festival (Ontario)

2017

Nominated for 2017 Juno Award (Best Vocal Jazz Album)

CAPACOA and Folk Music Ontario 2017 Official Showcase Artist

Performance at New York City's legendary Birdland Jazz Club

Mainstage performance at Focsani Blues Festival in Romania

Coast-to-coast Jazz Festival Tour from British Columbia to Newfoundland & Labrador

2016

Released "I'm Still Learning" with Justin Time Records (Fontana North/Universal)

Performances at Montreal's Upstairs Jazz, London's Aeolian Hall, Burlington's Performing Arts Centre, Guelph's River Run Centre, Brantford's Sanderson Centre, Hilton Beach's Old Town Hall

"Who Knows" album single nominated for Independent Music Award at Lincoln Centre (NYC)

2015

Performed at Tokyo International Jazz Festival in Japan for audience of over 1000

Opening performer for Christian McBride and his Big Band at Nathan Phillip's Square

Featured Gilda's Glub performer at Sony Centre for the Performing Arts with host Russell Peters

"Christmas on the Beach" single synced to Hallmark's "Charming Christmas" feature film

Saving the best for last: Barbra Lica and band put on the show of the series

Culture & Events — 18 April 2018



Barbra Lica and band, from left: Joel Visentin, Lica, Mark Godfrey, Tom Fleming and Will Fraser finish the show off with a soothing version of Edith Piaf's *La Vie En Rose*, April 12 at The Centre. Photos by Chris Marchand

By Chris Marchand

What's not to lica about Bar...(ugh, I'm sorry. I'll stop this lede right now).

Barbra Lica proved herself the classic example of the conundrum facing Dryden Entertainment Series patrons — the choice between staying home, or taking a chance on a mostly unknown quantity.

Aside from the 100 or so people in the seats, the rest of you who stayed home deserve to know the depth of the mistake you've made.

The Toronto-based effervescent jazz pixie brought with her a band of lost boys (Mark Godfrey on bass, Will Fisher on drums, Joel Visentin on piano and Tom Fleming on guitar) whose technical virtuosity rivalled the very best of players who have graced The Centre's stage.

That's not to say the evening was a deep dive into the esoteric, freeform experience that jazz can sometimes be. It was a carefully curated evening of standards, originals, even a jazzed up cover cover of 90s hit 'Lovefool' by The Cardigans, made accessible by Lica's flawless voice and a musical precision we rarely get to appreciate in Northwestern Ontario. The outfit struck a nice balance between well-rehearsed arrangements and brief but thrilling forays into instrumental abandon.

A jumpy, Django Reinhardt-style influenced much of the night, giving the evening a 'Paris in the '20s sort of vibe, capped off with a lovely cover of Edith Piaf's 'La Vie En Rose'.

Lica's show capped off the 2017-18 Dryden Entertainment Series, check out what the series has to offer in 2018-19 with a newly announced lineup at www.drydenentertainmentseries.ca.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2017

Jazz Fest

Jazz Fest 2017, Day 1: Frank reviews Barbra Lica, Joss Stone, and St. Paul and the Broken Bones

POSTED BY FRANK DE BLASE ON SAT, JUN 24, 2017 AT 4:00 AM

Well, the 16th edition of the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival took off its clothes and did a cannonball. The energy in the thick arid air was surprisingly electric; a vibe this strong at Jazz Fests past usually didn't get this feverish so quickly. It must have been the battle for souls raging on two different stages last night ... but first let's take a look at the show I knew we'd all enjoy: a confection of a swingin' band and a swingin' ma'am, Barbra Lica.

It starts and ends with Lica's voice. It's a bright, vibrant contralto one minute, laconic and syrupy the next when she lets a phrase die on the vine and trail off. Lica's songs are little, self-deprecating vignettes about drunken first dates and finding an ex-lover on social media. She peppered her originals

with some Duke Ellington ("Just A-Sittin' and A-Rockin'"), some Cole Porter ("Just One of Those Things"), and a version of "A Spoonful of Sugar" -- however, the way Lica pulled it off, light and airy and delivered at hyper speed, earns it the new title of "A Spoonful of Trucker Speed." Her band was tight and a vision of precision. Lica was charming through and through. Her voice was beautiful ... heart-breaking, really.

Barbra Lica will play again Saturday, June 24, at Montage Music Hall. 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. Tickets are \$30, or you can use a Club Pass. barbralicamusic.com.

I'm convinced now more than ever that soul wants your soul. Soul music isn't for the betterment of your soul or to lift your spirits high; it wants you to feel it deep in the fissures of your fevered brain all the way down to your naughty parts. Me? Hell, I'm down with it and will go along willingly. I'm the devil in Miss Jones after all. And I witnessed the devil in Miss Stone with 1800 other lost souls in Kodak Hall to see **Joss Stone**.

click to enlarge



PHOTO BY FRANK DE BLASE
Barbra Lica played Max of Eastman Place on Friday night.

click to enlarge

LATEST IN MUSIC BLOG



Jazz Fest 2017, Day 9: Frank reviews Danielle Ponder and the Tomorrow People and The

Hooligans

by Frank De Blase



Jazz Fest 2017, Day 9: Daniel reviews Balkun Brothers and Bonerama

by Daniel J. Kushner



Jazz Fest 2017, Day 9: Ron reviews Donny McCaslin, Matthew Stevens Trio, and Benny Green

Jazz Sensation Barbra Lica Returns to New York for Performance at Birdland

by BWW News Desk Apr. 24, 2017



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Acclaimed Canadian jazz singer/songwriter and first runner up in the 2013 [Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Voice Competition](#) Barbra Lica will be returning to New York on Sunday, June 11 with her quintet to perform songs from her new album, "I'm Still Learning" at legendary jazz club, Birdland.

A seasoned live act on the Canadian club and festival circuit, Lica routinely dazzles in intimate spaces and prestigious auditoriums alike. She has supported jazz giants including [Christian McBride](#), [Pat Metheny](#) and [Terence Blanchard](#) and performed internationally at the Tokyo International Jazz Festival. Whatever the stage, Lica's deep passion for jazz and the music of classic American vocalists is evident.

"I'm Still Learning" follows Lica's celebrated 2012 debut *That's What I Do* and its 2015 follow-up *Love Songs*, the latter a collaborative effort with noted producer/guitarist/songwriter [James Bryan](#) ([Nelly Furtado](#), [Olly Murs](#)).

A mix of original tunes as well as standards, *I'm Still Learning* earned Lica a 2017 JUNO Award nomination (Canadian Grammy) for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year. Stream the complete album [here](#) or listen on Spotify [here](#). Also check out Barbra's newest music video "London Town" [here](#).

Barbra Lica will be performing from 6 pm to 7:15 pm. Tickets are \$30 + \$10 minimum for food/drinks.

Friday's JunoFest festivities recap



LYNN SAXBERG, OTTAWA CITIZEN

[More from Lynn Saxberg, Ottawa Citizen](http://ottawacitizen.com/author/lynnsaxberg) ([HTTP://OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/AUTHOR/LYNNSAXBERG](http://ottawacitizen.com/author/lynnsaxberg))



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Published on: April 1, 2017 | Last Updated: April 1, 2017 10:13 AM EDT



The Devin Cuddy Band performs at the Juno Cup Jam at the Bourbon Room on March 30, 2017. *CHRIS DONOVAN / OTTAWA CITIZEN*

Unless you live under a soundproof rock, you know that the 2017 Juno Awards are being held in Ottawa this weekend.

While the main event is on Sunday night, there are a slew of other events.

The Juno Express rolled into town Friday carrying a trainload of Canada's best musicians.



Peter Hum

@peterhum

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#junoawards

12:54 AM - 1 Apr 2017

Barbra Lica brings JUNOFest jazz showcase to a crowd-pleasing close

Friday's JUNOFest jazz showcase ended with a poppy, wry and effusive set from Toronto singer Barbra Lica.

During a set split between stylized covers and witty, well-crafted originals, Lica and her band offered the night's most accessible and forthrightly entertaining set.

Lica was a focused, expressive singer with an appealing flutter to her voice and a deceptive amount of power backing her usually smooth and nuanced delivery.

Her material was tightly plotted and measured and it kept her and her witty personality squarely in the foreground.

Among her covers there was a backbeat-y, groovy version of Cole Porter's So In Love and a light, Latin-tinged rendition of the Cardigan's Lovefool. More conventionally, Lica sang A.C. Jobim's How Insensitive true to its original mood and groove, and Visentin took his most expansive piano solo of the set.

Lica's own song Coffee Shop was droll and bubbly. Her piece, Who Knows, which was set up with a funny, Facebook-related anecdote, became a more touching story about about seeing an ex with someone new.

For her country-gospel waltz Top Flight, Lica bumped Visentin off the piano bench and sang one of the night's most moving songs while she played.

For the set's penultimate tune, singer Matt Dusk joined Lica on stage. After some gags about their competition in the Juno Awards' best vocal jazz album category, Dusk and Lica sang the old, lightly kitschy tune Je t'aime.

The singing in French could have been better, which it was when Lica and her band huddled on stage to perform the Edith Piaf classic La Vie en Rose.

[Peter Hum \(http://domain.com//platform.twitter.com/widgets.js\)](http://domain.com//platform.twitter.com/widgets.js)

JUNO AWARDS (HTTP://OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/TAG/JUNO-AWARDS)

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Drake, Weeknd, Shawn Mendes get five Juno nominations each

Brampton's Alessia Cara gets four nominations for Canada's top music awards, being held in Ottawa on April 2.

Toronto artists featured heavily in the 2017 Juno Awards nominations, announced Tuesday, with big names like Drake, The Weeknd and Shawn Mendes sweeping up five nominations each and local favourites sprinkled throughout several category.

The nominees for one of Canadian music's biggest awards ceremony — now in its 46th year — were announced at a ceremony at Toronto's REBEL nightclub Tuesday morning.

Several Toronto artists also received their first Juno nods Tuesday, including electronic musician Harrison and jazz singer-songwriter Barbra Lica.

"I'm feeling on top of the world — I feel amazing, seriously," said Harrison, whose album, *Checkpoint Titanium*, is up for Electronic Album of the Year. "It's been a goal of mine, a nomination was all I wanted, right?"

Lica, contending for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year with *I'm Still Learning*, said the nomination was totally unexpected: "It really hit me like a truck, I had no idea, a good truck."

By **JACKIE HONG** Staff Reporter

Tues., Feb. 7, 2017



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Juno Awards Nominees Hold Court

By Kerry Doole Wed, 02/08/2017 - 07:56

The Juno Awards nominations event in Toronto attracted a large contingent of nominees covering a wide range of award categories.

They ranged from some artists who already have multiple Junos in their trophy case to first-timers wearing broad smiles as their names were announced.

FYI corralled many of the nominees for comments on what a Juno nomination means for their career, as well as updates on what they are now or will soon be working on.

Here's a random selection of their answers:

Barbra Lica – Vocal Jazz Album of the Year: (*I'm Still Learning*). "It's my first nomination and I'm like a tourist here, taking photos! I just sent one to my mum. It is awesome cos you always want to be in the big pond. I want to get on the Juno train to Ottawa, I've never partied on a train before!"

"I am going to Banff in March for a songwriters program. I have five new songs already and am looking ahead to a 2018 release."



2016 Juno Award winners Whitehorse



Toronto jazz singer Barbra Lica offers smiles and sympathy — not blues

BRAD WHEELER
The Globe and Mail
Published Thursday, Sep. 29, 2016 3:36PM EDT
Last updated Thursday, Sep. 29, 2016 3:38PM EDT

Comments Print / License AA

With her new album *I'm Still Learning* (her first on Justin Time Records), the graceful jazzer Barbra Lica announces her ability to absorb the teachings of those singers who came before her.

A fan of Betty Hutton, Peggy Lee and Nat King Cole, Toronto's Lica is comfortable in spry and breezy situations.

Her investigation into Ron Sexsmith's *Secret Heart* leads to whistling and lighthearted reggae ideas; elsewhere there are casual bossa nova invitations.

With her upbeat lilt and vocal cuteness on covers and originals, Lica offers smiles and sympathy, not blues. Maybe that is still to come – we understand she is still learning.

Barbra Lica launches I'm Still Learning on Oct. 3, 8 p.m., \$40, Old Mill, 21 Old Mill Rd., 416-236-2641 or barbralicamusic.com.

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Also on The Globe and Mail

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Barbra Lica Set to Release New Album!

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Submitted to Cashbox Canada

Barbra Lica is a fast-rising star in the Canadian Jazz scene and has been receiving accolades for a unique vocal ability that stresses subtlety and grace. Based in Toronto, Canada, Barbra's live show captivates audiences all over North America with her genuine warmth and confident stage presence. She has announced her third album, *I'm Still*



Learning will be released through Justin Time Records on September 30, 2016.

A deep passion for jazz and the music of classic American vocalists like Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Nat King Cole, and Betty Hutton led Barbra to pursue a Bachelor of Music specializing in Jazz Voice Performance at the University of Toronto, where she simultaneously studied Human Biology. She laughingly recalls, "I'd be doing my jazz combo rehearsals in my lab coat then running down to the sciences building!" She honed her performance chops on historic Toronto stages such as The Rex Hotel and The Old Mill with the likes of the John MacLeod Big Band and the Dave Young Sextet. In 2013, Barbra was runner-up in the prestigious Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition in New York City.

Now a seasoned live act on the Canadian club and festival circuit, Barbra consistently performs at venues from intimate spaces to prestigious auditoriums, such as Toronto's Jazz Bistro and Koerner Hall. Most recently, she has been billed as an opening act for such acts as Christian McBride, Pat Metheny, and Terence Blanchard.

As a songwriter, she remains resolutely upbeat and optimistic, concentrating on the minutiae of day-to-day life: "I keep my personal life drama-free," she explains. "I read my sci-fi novels and manga, build puzzles, and get up at 6 a.m. to train for my next marathon." Her personality comes through in her singing, delivering jazz pop songs and heart-wrenching ballads with an equal measure of positivity and genuine emotion. "I know life can be hard and stressful," she explains, "but I feel art exists so beauty can exist." These are songs from the perspective of the 21st Century woman, addressing themes of love and the complicated realities of modern relationships in a way that is uplifting and authentic.

Her debut album *That's What I Do* (Triplet / Universal Jazz Japan) was released to widespread acclaim in 2012, ranking her in Canada's Top 5 Jazz singers on the CBC, as well Top 5 up-and-coming Toronto jazz

artists on blogTO. Her second album, Love Songs (Do Right! Music Japan), was a collaborative effort with noted producer/guitarist/songwriter James Bryan (Prozzak, Nelly Furtado, Olly Murs) made it's Japanese debut live at the Tokyo International Jazz Festival on September 5th in front of over 1000 audience members at the Tokyo International Forum.

One listen to her newest album, I'm Still Learning, and it's easy to hear that Barbra smiles when she sings. Her versatility as a performer continues to grow along with her fanbase. "Lica smiles when she sings. You can hear it. When you see her in concert you'll see it too", says Tim Tamashiro (CBC).

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Barbra Lica, jazz music's Little Miss Sunshine

Valerie Hill

Waterloo Region Record | Dec 08, 2016

WATERLOO — A university professor once told Barbra Lica that one day she would have a major heartbreak and after that, she would sing so much better.

It was an odd comment and though Lica doesn't think of herself as perpetually happy or bouncy the singer/songwriter has managed to earn the nickname Little Miss Sunshine and she's been known to wear a huge, gold "Love" necklace.

"I've tried to be earnest," she said in an interview from her Toronto home, remembering one song in particular about the pain of lost love. "I'd get to the chorus and everyone would laugh. That's not what I was going for."

Even when she went to London, England to visit the jazz label Decca, apparently they said to her "don't you have anything a bit glass-half-empty?"

Lica may not sing from a place of angst but she does sing from a place of feeling and on Dec. 9, the singer and her quintet return to the stage at Waterloo's Jazz Room, a venue she loves.

The singer is funny, sincere and down to earth, the kind of performer who gives her all with each song, something she partly learned from her parents, who were both musicians.

Lica's mother was a professional singer, immigrating to Canada from Romania. Her father, a pianist, was Russian born. The met in a band and in Lica's formative years, the house was always filled with music, mostly popular. Her parents divorced when she was young, but rather than hurting her musical education, it actually launched her in the direction of jazz.

"Mom remarried an accountant," she said. "He had this giant jazz collection."

Her stepdad even built a little sound booth in her bedroom so she could listen to music, undisturbed and without disturbing anyone else.

It was her stepdad who always encouraged Lica to pursue her dreams. He knew what it was to have a dream unrealized and he didn't want her to suffer the same fate.

Lica's mom also encouraged her to pursue her dream, but understood first hand the difficulties of a career in music. She wanted her daughter to have an alternative, just in case.

"She was always unbelievably supportive, but she was scared," said Lica. "My mom is so pragmatic."

Lica chose science, studying jazz performance at the University of Toronto with a minor in human biology. It was a lot of work, studying music all day then hunching over lab equipment in the evenings.

After graduating, her mother asked hopefully "are you going to be a scientist?" to which the response was not unexpected.

"I said 'no.'"

While still in university, her music had been getting airplay on radio so she thought "OK, let's go for it."

That decision was a good one for the singer who earned her musical stripes performing on iconic Toronto stages such as The Rex Hotel and The Old Mill.

Lica's early influences included Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Nat King Cole and Betty Hutton and she was named one of Canada's top upcoming female jazz artists as well as the first runner up in the 2013 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Competition.

To date, the singer has released four albums: "That's What I Do" in 2012, "Kissing You" in 2015 and a Christmas album in 2015. Her most recent album, "I'm Still Learning" was released this year, her first record deal with Justin Time Records.

This new album is reflective and about "making many, many mistakes" in life.

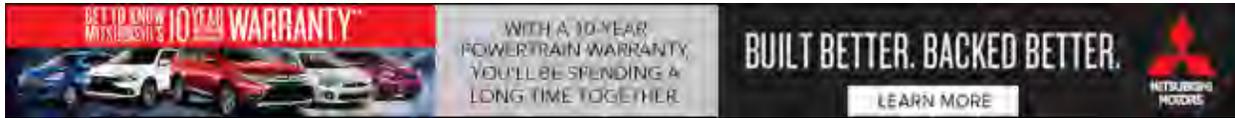
She said, "You think that as you get older, it's about wanting to learn."

Lica will perform songs from her most recent album but said an actual coast-to-coast tour won't officially begin until June.

She is pleased with the public reaction to her music thus far.



Barbra Lica is bringing her sunny jazz to The Jazz Room on Friday.



ENTERTAINMENT LOCAL

Jazz singer Barbra Lica performs Friday as part of Ontario Contact in Peterborough

By Kennedy Gordon, Postmedia Network
Thursday, November 3, 2016 10:57:43 EDT AM



Barbra Lica

Every one of the dozens of performers coming to Peterborough this weekend for the Ontario Contact conference and workshop has something different going on.

Barbra Lica is no exception. She's often billed as a jazz singer, and understands that that's the best way to encapsulate what she does. "I feel like I end up falling into the category of jazz," says the Toronto-based singer. But, she adds, there's more going on, and always has been.

Lica performs Friday night at Showplace in one of the musical showcases that are part of Ontario Contact. Visit showplace.org

or stop by the box office for ticket information on these events.

Ontario Contact, centred at the Holiday Inn Waterfront this weekend, is an industry conference aimed at people who work in the field of touring entertainment, and will feature showcase performances by musicians, dancers and more.

Lica's music harkens back to the colourful world of '60s pop - not the British Invasion stuff, but the more grownup music that came out of jazz and swing, like Doris Day and Peggy Lee. This spills over into her personal style, which has a vintage sort of charm without any snark. "There's no hipster irony here, sorry," she laughs.

Lica, still in her mid-20s, has quickly emerged as one of Canada's top up-and-coming performers, with two albums out - That's What I Do, 2012, and Kissing You, 2015 - and a steady touring regimen.

But it wasn't always the plan - she originally had other ideas.

"I was intending to be a doctor right up until my last year of university," she says. That was at the University of Toronto, where she studied music while majoring in medical sciences, eventually earning a degree in jazz singing.

Part of that original decision came from growing up with parents who were both professional musicians.

"I saw their struggles and I thought I would have to be more pragmatic," she says.

In the early years of her career, she used what she calls the "black book" method to gig - teaming up with different musicians at different times for different performances. That allowed her to refine her approach and to adapt to different styles, she says.

Eventually, she ended up with a permanent band, which will be with her when she performs in Peterborough Friday night.

When Ontario Contact is done, Lica returns to the road while working on new songs for her next record. She has ideas for shows in the U.S. and overseas - she's performed in Japan and would love to keep up the global journeying.

"I want to play as far-reaching as we can," she says.



Monday, February 29, 2016

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Barbra Lica sparkles in downtown jazz concert

By [Glen Silverthorn](#)

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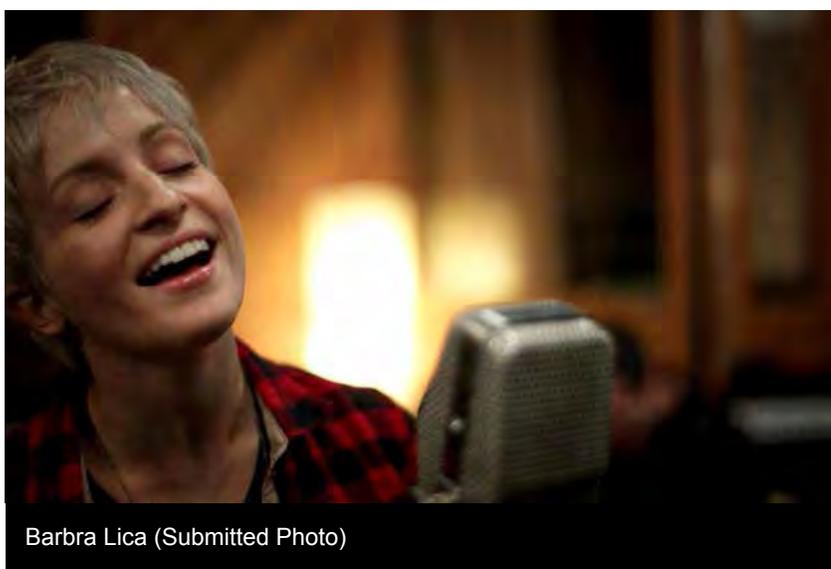
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Barbra Lica (Submitted Photo)

I was only too happy to accept an invitation from Frank DiFelice, director of the Brantford Downtown Jazz Concert Series, to hear Toronto jazz vocalist Barbra Lica in the Sanderson Centre's main lobby.

Unfortunately, due to a previous commitment, I was only able to catch the second half of her Feb, 8 show but what I was amazed by what I saw and heard.

Lica delivered sparkling arrangements of tunes by Duke Ellington, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and others.

She also has written a number of original songs, some of which she performed during the evening. One was the slow romantic ballad, Five o'clock Lullaby, which revealed how talented she is at bending the straight notes coming into a warm vibrato at the end of her phrases. We also heard excellent creative guitar work from Tom Fleming on this one.

Lica's love of singing was conveyed to the audience by the joy that always seemed to be present in her facial expressions as she performed. Her intonation and dynamic voice control on all of the pieces were phenomenal. Between each tune, she explained why she liked a certain composer or what situation prompted her to write a certain song. such as Coffee Shop or Fishies.

The rest of her backup jazz ensemble consisted of pianist Joel Bisentin, bassist Marc Rogers and, on drums, Will Fisher. These four high-calibre musicians have only worked as a unit backing Lica since May but their tight cohesive sound and excellent individual solo work were exemplary.

Fisher and Bisentin studied at Humber College, Fleming and Lica at the University of Toronto and Rogers attended the University Of Texas.

An up tempo swinging Cole Porter piece, So In Love, featured everyone doing some solo work, especially Fisher doing some great drumstick work on the rim. On the Ellington tune Just Settin' and a Rockin', Lica tells about waiting for her man who doesn't get home on time. On one fast tune, Bisentin rose to the occasion on the keys as his fingers danced up and down the keyboard with superb jazz runs punctuated with block chords. Rogers did some fancy walking bass runs on the high strings on this one. Love In The Old Fashioned Way was an up tempo piece which again featured Bisentin with some excellent cascading piano passages with Rogers employing some excellent slap bass technique at various moments. Fishes, another medium tempo original happy tune about finding a date on the Internet, had a kind of funky rock beat to it.

To slightly alter the scene and the sound the four instrumentalists collected around Lica who stayed at the mic. This time, Bisentin had strapped on an accordion and Fisher brought out his snare drum. With a Latin rhumba style the group performed Why Don't You Pretend, with Fisher executing some clever brush work on the snare. The second piece, La Vie En Rose, I felt was the best version of this song I'd ever heard. Lica's interpretation was flawless, and had the added extra of the accordion sounding like a concertina. It made me feel as if I was in Paris -- France, that is!

After completing the evening with the classic Cole Porter song, It's Just One Of Those Things, and receiving a loud standing ovation, Lica sang as an encore one of her favourites, Irving Berlin's Careful, It's My Heart.

During an interview after the show, Lica told me about her busy touring schedule and participation last September at the International Jazz Festival in Tokyo.

She said that she is working on her fourth album. Her debut album, That's What I Do, was released in 2012 with a live to air concert broadcast on Jazz FM 91.1. In November 2013, she was first runner-up in the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz voice competition in New Jersey. Her second full-length album, Kissing You, was officially released in January 2015. She has been rated as one Canada's top female jazz artists.

She performs in Guelph this weekend and, during March and April, in Hamilton and London.

The downtown jazz series continues April 18 with Luis Mario Ochoa Quintet and on June 6 with Charles Di Raimondo. General admission tickets cost \$30.

E-Editions

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BARBRA LICA

Feature
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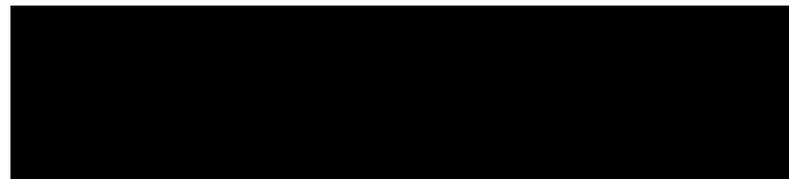
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Christian McBride Big Band / Barbra Lica

Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto ON, June 23

By *Kerry Doole*

Published Jun 24, 2015



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Photo: Kevin Jones

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The choice of a vivacious and sweet-voiced young jazz-pop singer to open up a big band show may have been unorthodox, but local songstress Barbra Lica seized the moment with authority. She mixed breezy original tunes with such standards as "I Get A Kick Out Of You" and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," the latter confirming she can convince in delivering deeper emotions, not just light tunes about food, sugar and dating. Helping her cause was an ace band featuring keyboardist Lou Pomanti and guitarist James Bryan. The latter found pop success in *Philosopher Kings* and *Prozzäk*, and he impressed here with tastefully melodic playing. A charming performer, Lica is one to be watched.

Christian McBride gave something of a master class in how to pace a big band performance. All too often, the strength in numbers of a large ensemble can result in something of a sonic horns-led bludgeoning, but McBride and his ace accompanists (17 in total) struck just the right balance between restraint and power. As a bassist, the four-time Grammy winner has shone in a wide variety of musical settings, but it was his skill as a composer, arranger and bandleader that shone through here.

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MUSIC

'A good start': Canadian jazz singer Barbra Lica headlines CNY Jazz Central cabaret finale

Jonathan Monfiletto | jonathan.monfiletto@lee.net May 5, 2015



Photo provided

Canadian jazz singer Barbra Lica is preparing for her first concerts in the United States, which will include headlining

When Barbra Lica's name was announced during her graduation ceremony from the University of Toronto, it came with the designation that she earned a Bachelor of Music with an additional major in human biology.

At the time, the Toronto-born jazz singer and songwriter knew she had the talent for singing and performing but didn't yet feel that she had the passion for making a career out of it. Her degree, in fact, reflects a compromise with her parents that she would pursue music school.

But, it was that moment in which Lica realized she wanted to strive to become a performer instead of a doctor — her childhood dream, she said, was to become a singing doctor along the lines of the real-life Patch Adams made famous by Robin Williams' portrayal in film.

"I was doing music school, trying it out because they knew I was good at it," she said. "I was doing other things, and I was fighting it. ... I started realizing that even though I loved the science courses, I really was going to end up dedicating myself to music."

In a speech, one of her professors termed it "the monkey on your back," she said: "You can ignore it, and you can do what you want. You can try to hide it, but periodically you have to feed this thing or it's going to claw your eyes out," Lica said.

For the Canadian artist, that was music. And now, she is preparing to perform in the United States for the first time.

After a Saturday, May 2 concert in Easton, Pennsylvania as part of the Mercantile Home's Live at the Gold Room Distinctive Music Series, Lica is slated to head to Syracuse Sunday, May 3 to close out the CNY Jazz Central's 2014-15 cabaret season.

The doors at the Sheraton Syracuse University Grand Ballroom, 801 University Ave., Syracuse, are set to open at 4 p.m., and Lica is set to hit the stage at 5 p.m.

Tickets cost \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door or \$10 with a student identification card. Tickets can be purchased at cnyjazz.org/subscribe, and more information can be found by calling (315) 479-5299.

After finishing runner-up in the 2013 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Voice Competition in Newark, New Jersey in her first appearance in the states, Lica said she is "super excited" to perform her first real show in America after cabaret organizer Larry Luttinger approached her.

"I've been trying to do it more," Lica said. "It's a good first concert in the states, as oppose to just going and doing a showcase or something. He's (Luttinger) bringing over the whole band. We're going to do this with the people I'm used to playing with and the stuff we've been playing up until now. I feel like it's going to be a good start."

As CNY Jazz Central concludes its season, Luttinger said Lica fits in with the kinds of acts the organization looks for in its concerts and the types of audiences that typically turns out to see those acts.

"We always try to bring in very accessible acts, very popular acts suitable for all ages," he said. "We don't want anything to be difficult to understand. We always try to feature veteran talent along with emerging talent, sometimes on the same bill."

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JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

Kissing You - Barbra Lica

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Kissing You

Barbra Lica

Independent BLM-1401C (barbralica.com)

It's encouraging to see good, young singers emerge in the jazz realm. It's even more encouraging to see them thrive and grow as [Barbra Lica](#) has with her second album *Kissing You*. That said, Lica may not satisfy jazz purists, as she has strong pop elements in her work, especially in her original material. Similar to her first

album, *Kissing You* alternates between clever originals (eight of the 11 tracks) and imaginative reworkings of standards. Genre aside, what Lica is consistently very good at is getting a story across. Her pretty, girlish voice (shades of Stacey Kent and Blossom Dearie) is well-suited to her material. Her lyric writing amuses on the lighter songs such as *Canoe* ("You're no dreamboat but you're a really nice canoe") and touches us on the more serious *That's What I Hate*, about the end of a romance. The reworkings of the standards really stood out for me as genuinely fresh approaches, in particular on Cole Porter's *I Get A Kick Out of You*, where the George Martinesque take gives us a renewed and charming song.

Author: [Cathy Riches](#)



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MUSIC

5 up and coming jazz artists in Toronto

Posted by **Jacob Thompson** / AUGUST 21, 2014

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While many fans lament the end of the golden age of [jazz in Toronto](#), there has undoubtedly been an influx of young local talent within the last decade. Some come from respected post-secondary music programs, while some seem to come out of nowhere with their own DIY projects.

The result is a diversity in sound; classical, fusion, lounge, and free form are all well represented here in the city with a plethora of bars and festivals to support it. Peak your interest? Here are five Toronto jazz artists to keep an eye on.

Barbra Lica

Recently selected as one of Canada's top 5 jazz singers by CBC, the Toronto born Lica sings an upbeat, easygoing brand of jazz but with a soulful twist behind it. This summer she's been touring the festival circuit with stops in Toronto, Markham, and an upcoming show in Niagara.

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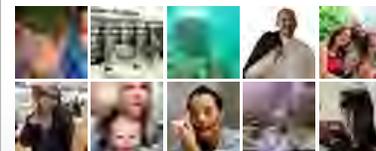
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Barbra Lica sings heart out on new jazz record

Published on Wednesday January 16, 2013

Trish Crawford

Entertainment Reporter

As a 16-year-old auditioning for a place on *Canadian Idol*, Toronto's [Barbra Lica](#) sang, "I can't give you anything but love."

The jazz oldie, written in 1928, seems like an odd pick for a teenager in a singing contest.

"I really like jazz," explains Lica, 24, who has just released her debut album *That's What I Do* and will be among the headliners at "Bacharachattack" a sold-out tribute to songwriters Burt Bacharach and Hal David at the Old Mill on Monday.

Possessing a cheerful, upbeat persona that has earned her the nickname "Little Miss Sunshine," she is nevertheless savvy about the business and somewhat of an old soul, say those involved in producing her first album.

After all, she spent her childhood listening to Ella Fitzgerald, Doris Day, Louis Armstrong (she does a hilarious imitation) and Betty Hutton. They were in her dad's record collection she played in her bedroom; pop tunes were just for dancing.

"I have high hopes for her," says pianist Joe Sealy of Triplet Records Inc. "In the classy world of jazz, she has the potential of Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee."

Lica has a music degree in jazz singing from the University of Toronto as well as a major in medical sciences, and is well-schooled and respected by the musicians who play with her, Sealy says. She also writes many of her own songs.

"She writes good stuff," says Sealy, who used her on his own 2009 album, *Songs*, to sing a saucy, torch song, "You're Gonna Miss Me."

"I can't sing that song without blushing," Lica says. "The lyrics are scandalous."

Sealy was searching for someone to sing the song when his recording company partner, bass player Paul Novotny, heard Lica singing with a student ensemble.

"I was shocked," says Novotny. Her skill is in delivering clear tones and distinct lyrics, he says.

"She made me listen to the lyrics. Beyond her technical abilities, she was telling me a story."

They decided to have her record "You're Gonna Miss Me" and, Novotny says, "I was thunderstruck, she sounded so mature."

Both Sealy and Novotny perform with Lica often, and praise her preparation and work ethic as well as her level-headed attitude about the business.

"For someone so young, she has an impressive level of musical maturity," says Ross Porter, CEO of Jazz.FM91. "Many singers spend years trying to find their vocal 'sweet spot.' Barbra's already there."

Lica picks and chooses her gigs because "I don't mind playing less often and be in better places with nice stages."



Barbra Lica is turning heads with her debut jazz album *That's What I Do*. She plays the Old Mill on Monday.

BARBRA LICA PHOTO

It is difficult to sing over the noise of people talking, she says, and she's had the undignified request to "stay away from the salad bar."

"People make a big deal of not feeding you," she says, adding she's very aware of the dark side of the jazz world where there can be lots of late nights and lots of partying too hard.

But there's the sunny side too with singing around a fire at a summer camp with Robi Botos or laughing uproariously with singer Heather Bambrick, her former teacher.

Lica says she's not interested in money or fame, but has a burning desire to sing, just for the joy of it.

It's a talent she hid from her parents — her mother is a former singer and her father is an accountant. Lica says if they knew she could sing, she'd have been hauled out to perform for guests. She and her brother, both of whom played the piano, were already "performing monkeys" putting on shows in the living room, she says. Entering the *Canadian Idol* contest revealed her talent to her parents.

They were so determined she have a music career, they balked at her going to university to study sciences, she says, adding, "They said you can always be a doctor later."

As a compromise, she majored in both music and human biology. But medicine has faded from her dreams, she says, adding, "I like to sing. It makes me happy."

MEET 2013 SARAH VAUGHAN VOCAL FINALIST BARBRA LICA

October 8, 2013. Posted by Tim Wilkins.

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WBGO congratulates Barbra Lica, one of five finalists in the **2013 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition (SVVC)**: Click [here](#) or on the image below to hear her sing.

Along with four other finalists, Barbra was chosen from hundreds of singers from around the world to perform November 10 at 3 p.m. at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Victoria Theater for this year's "Sassy" Award, named in honor of legendary jazz singer and Newark native Sarah Vaughan, and prizes of up to \$5,000. She will sing for judges Al Jarreau, Janis Siegel, and Gretchen Parlato, WBGO music director Gary Walker and JAZZ ROOTS producer Larry Rosen.

Barbra was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario. She discovered jazz for the first time at the age of six while shuffling through her dad's CD collection and immediately began to sing along to the music of Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee. In 2012, Barbra's debut album, "That's What I Do," was released with a live-to-air concert celebration on Toronto's Jazz.FM91. She performs regularly in the Greater Toronto area, presenting a wide repertoire of both jazz standards and original music, and was recently named one of Canada's top five female jazz singers by CBC radio.

WBGO will interview Barbra on-air before the competition.

Like what you hear? Click [here](#) to let us know, and bookmark [WBGO.ORG/SASSY](#) for all the latest festival updates.

Congratulations, Barbra, and see you in November!



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