

# Ooh La La, Lola!

By Barb Wilson

Who do you think of when you think of adult contemporary music (or AC, as it's known in the "biz")? Michael Bublé? Or maybe Taylor Swift?

How about Lola Spriggs? She's Ottawa's own adult contemporary vocalist, whose pop and dance-beat numbers have carved out a strong presence here and south of the border. In fact, her single "Your One and Only" has been nominated for the 2012 Hollywood Music in Media Awards!

One of the AC industry's hottest new talents, Spriggs bears none of the hallmarks of what was once perceived as the music of an older generation. She's got panache and a hip, progressive style. She "writes the songs," and they are definitely stellar.

A business consultant by day and a vocalist by night, Spriggs was born in Montreal, moved to Ottawa as a youth after a stint in the southern U.S., and now lives in Navan. She began singing as a teen, doing improv, then progressed to bands and doing radio jingles, and is now in the big leagues. "I took my inspiration from my mother, who always encouraged me to do what I loved, and singing was certainly it," she says.

Her music is particularly popular on the U.S. AC stations. In 2010, after years of hard work and countless trips down the 401 to

record in a Toronto studio, she cracked the U.S. AC top 40 with the hit single "Nobody But You." That song and another hit, "I Wanna Love You," were nominated in 2010 for the Hollywood Music in Media Awards.

With a larger, more defined audience south of the border, the AC music market is a lucrative and competitive one. Which means that Spriggs has to consider marketing her music as much as making it. While social media factors big into Spriggs' efforts (she has a website — [www.lolaspriggs.com](http://www.lolaspriggs.com) — and she's on Twitter), some of her biggest gains have been through good old-fashioned radio.

"My music has to get heard. I do shows when I can, but the airplay I get through radio, and making the most of the Web and Twitter, is really important too." She listens to all types of music, even if not in her favourite genre. "It's important to know what's out there and what other people are listening to."

The busy entrepreneur has produced four CDs: *Expressed*, released in 2004, followed by *Lifescrapes* (2005), and *Barefoot* (2008). Her latest, *Shine*, was launched last December. "*Shine* was the result of a year's work," says Spriggs. "The band I work with has been together since 2010, and I've got a wonderful producer in Marcus Kane."



Photo: Michelle Valberg

## Lola Time Means Music

Because Spriggs spends many weekends recording in Toronto, most of her prep work is done over the phone with her producer during the week. She spends two to three nights working on lyrics and melodies, coming up with new ideas, and working on the business side of her musical career. Once in the studio, she records immediately.

Spriggs appreciates the support her employer has provided. "They're generous in helping me to balance my career with the demands of the music."

With a demanding lifestyle, she attributes a dedicated fitness routine, proper diet, and rest as keys to her ability to manage her commitments. "You need to be rested and fit in this industry," she counsels.

So how does she manage to balance everything? "Music is my outlet, my 'me' time," she says. "It's where I really express my

creativity. I get that elated feeling when I'm in the studio. On the drive home, I'm pumped and really energized from the sessions."

## So You Wanna Be A Rock Star?

Spriggs offers some practical tips for aspiring singers who hope to launch a musical career. "Find a mentor who is the right fit for you... [who] can help you see things objectively, and take advantage of his or her experience." She also points out the industry's very competitive nature, especially for young artists hoping to catch that big break. "Get into music because you love it, not because you want to be a star. While you need to stay true to your art, you also need to listen carefully to what's going on around you and make decisions that make sense from that business perspective."

No doubt you'll be hearing more from Lola Spriggs. Just stay tuned to that radio dial. Ms. Spriggs' songs might soon very well be at the top of your AC music list. **HWO**



Ottawans are a lucky lot. We keep fit by training and participating in a variety of local running events from April to October. And we raise much-needed funds for the charities hosting many of these events, with proceeds going to research, education, and the prevention of diseases. Good efforts for good causes!

Approximately 450 people are expected to participate in one especially good cause on October 14th — the MADD DASH 2012, an annual run and walk in support of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). What makes this event stand out? The statistics at [www.maddashottawa.com](http://www.maddashottawa.com) speak for themselves: "Every day, on average, 4 Canadians are killed and 174 are injured in impairment-related crashes. We estimate between 1,250 and 1,500 people are killed and more than 63,000 are injured each year in Canada in impairment-related crashes." The MADD DASH 2012 is a significant public awareness and fundraising event and all monies raised from it go to supporting youth programs, public education, and victim services in Ottawa.

This year's MADD DASH marks its fifth anniversary for MADD Ottawa. Fitness enthusiasts and everyone in the community at large can enjoy a 10 or 5 kilometre run and a 5 kilometre walk through residential areas of Kanata, starting and finishing at Earl of March Secondary School.

MADD Ottawa's focus is to increase awareness about the impact of impaired driving, and to support the victims of its criminal violence by raising funds. The chapter's volunteers, through their tireless efforts, are helping to

make inroads through public education and victim services, educational and support programs, and working with youth. But there's much more to be done to reduce the number of impaired-driving incidences in Ottawa, and across the country.

Colleen MacKenzie is a founding member of the MADD Ottawa chapter, formed in 1995, and an active volunteer since its inception. MacKenzie will be walking with other family members in the MADD DASH 2012, as part of a three-generation family team in memory of her son Blair. She is well aware that "life is very fragile and a life can be lost in a second."

MacKenzie's team will be among other family teams at this year's run/walk — many participating in honour of family members affected by impaired driving or other driving incidents. MacKenzie feels the event is beneficial for runners and walkers of all levels, whether touched by an impaired driving incident or not. There will be opportunities for people to chat with others en route and, as MacKenzie says, "the event portrays a message that people are thinking of future generations."

MADD Ottawa has worked hard saving lives and keeping our local roads safe. MacKenzie is pleased with the partnership that has grown between the Ottawa chapter and others in the community — paramedics, police, politicians. "It's about making wise choices, and you realize that you are a community sharing the same passion."

Information on the MADD DASH 2012 can be found at [www.maddashottawa.com](http://www.maddashottawa.com). We hope *Healthwise Ottawa* readers will support (and participate in) this event. **HWO**

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