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## Local performer places first in country singing competition

By DENISE McDONALD  
**BALLANTRAE** — Ten-year-old Lawnie Wallace of Ballantrae is following in her father's footsteps.

On September 5 and 6, the daughter of singer/songwriter William Wallace III took part in the Ontario Open Country Singing Contest at the Capital Theatre in Brantford and was awarded first place in the 12 and under category.

Performing Patsy Kline's hit number "Crazy" and "Singing the Blues" by Marty Robbins, Lawnie thrilled the audience through the preliminary, semi-

final and final competitions to receive two standing ovations upon completion.

"I had no idea I was going to win," says the talented young performer. "I just went up there to sing and have fun."

### RECEIVED TROPHY

For placing first against eight finalists in her division, Lawnie received a trophy and \$100. Her older brother Jason, 12, also received a trophy and \$50 for placing fifth in the same competition.

"She's literally been singing since she could walk," says mother Kathy proudly. "She's such an easy-going child, always happy and loves people. Even if you disturb her in the middle of the night, she wakes up with a smile on her face."

According to Mrs. Wallace, she and her husband always felt Lawnie would be a good singer.

After all, not only is her father a talented performer, her aunt Julia Wallace entertained Whitchurch-Stouffville residents for many years before leaving the area to attend university. In fact, Ms. Wallace is

due to release two singles this fall, written by her brother.

According to Lawnie, she's had no professional training except that received from her father and aunt.

### PERFORMING FAMILY

"Everytime there was a competition, Aunt Julia would come over and practice with me," she says. "She'd tell me what I was doing wrong, when I wasn't using enough hand gestures and things like that."

Practising two hours a day, seven days a week, Lawnie says she uses a singing machine given to her by her father. This then allows her to hear the music, without the benefit of words and formulate her own technique.

"My favorite music is jazz, pop and country," she adds. "And I especially like to sing Patsy Kline and Juice Newton songs."

Not satisfied with merely singing other performer's songs, Lawnie began trying her hand at songwriting and composed her first song "The Trees are Green" at the age of seven.

"She wrote it for my brother who was killed in a train crash in Oakville," says Mrs. Wallace.

### FELT SAD

"I just thought I was old enough to write songs and wanted to be like my Dad who now writes for CBS Records," says Lawnie. "I was feeling very sad, so I just sat down and wrote any words I thought of. Dad helped me but I thought up most of it myself."

Three years ago, Lawnie appeared on stage for the first time with her father during a Ronnie Hawkins concert at Sauble Beach Speedway.

"Some people heard Lawnie sing and asked her to perform at Barrie for a benefit concert for the tornado victims," Mrs. Wallace says.

During the concert featuring some of country music's finest performers, including Murray McLaughlin, Kelita Haverland and her aunt, Lawnie received her first standing ovation.

"The crowd literally went nuts," Mrs. Wallace says. "It was great."

### PLACED SECOND

She also took part in the Canadian Open Country Singing contest held in Simcoe this past July and placed second against stiff competition.

"Her father and I try to encourage her as much as we can," continues Mrs. Wallace. "We think her singing is wonderful and the contests really exciting."

When asked what she'd like to do with her present talent, Lawnie says she'd someday like to become a famous country singing star.

"I would also like to have the chance to perform at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee," she adds.



Ten-year-old Lawnie Wallace, Ballantrae, practices her singing two hours a day, seven days a week with the help of a singing machine, a present from her father, singer/songwriter William Wallace III. —Denise McDonald

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