

Family taking note of journey through music industry

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Walk by the Belo family home in east-end Stouffville and you'll likely hear Brendan singing and playing the piano or his brother Zach trying to master a John Mayer song on the guitar.

"That's how we roll," said Belo family matriarch Brianna, whose two other children, Caleb and Malaya, are just as musically inclined as their siblings.

"It's like a jam session in my house all the time. I love it," Mrs. Belo said as Brendan, 12, played piano in the front room and Zach, 14, played guitar down the hall.

Brendan's fan base may grow beyond his family and the Springvale Baptist Church congregation, as he is one of the singers featured on the recently released *Mini Pop Kids 10* CD.

"I thought it would be cool to use a talent I love to use," Brendan said.

Mini Pops Kids is produced by K-Tel and "encourages and empowers kids to be confident and shoot for their dreams with versions of current pop songs that the entire family can enjoy," according to the media release.

There is at least one famous alumni among the Mini Pops Kids. Myles Erlick was one of the Billies

in Billy Elliot's Toronto and Chicago productions. He also performed last fall, with his brother Kolton, on The Ellen Show.

Brendan, Zach and Mayala first auditioned for *Mini Pops Kids 9* last year. Only Zach was chosen. Caleb did not audition because puberty took charge of his vocal chords and dropped his singing voice an octave or two.

The performers must also be between the ages of 12 and 14. Caleb is 16. Zach sang Justin Bieber's *Boyfriend* and had solos on a few other songs.

MINI POPS CD

This year, the soon-to-be Grade 9 student at Stouffville District Secondary School decided to record a demo and give Brendan a shot on the album.

Mom has been behind her children's participation in the project since Day 1.

"It's a good learning process for them to see what it's all about. It's not that we're famous by any means, but it's good life lessons," Mrs. Belo said.

The process, she said, made the children understand there is a lot of work that goes into obtaining Bieber-like success. Not that that is what they are looking for.

"If nothing else, it's a wonderful (experience). It's all about keeping them grounded," she said.

And what do the boys think of Biebermania?

"I think that he's getting full of himself and shouldn't spit on his fans," Zach said of the Bieb's public altercation while in Toronto a couple of weeks ago.

While the Grammy is still to come, Zach has won the 2011 edition of Stouffville's *Got Talent*. He came in third in this year's show as well as in 2010. Brendan came in second this year.

Along with singing and tickling the ivories, Brendan plays guitar, drums and the saxophone, to name a few. If you attended the 2012 Strawberry Festival, you likely heard him play the ukulele too.

Mrs. Belo, who learned classical piano as a child, taught her kids a few chords but otherwise they are self-taught, with some help from YouTube and the musical genes of their father Oliver.

Next up for Brendan and Zach is the Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians Youth Performing Arts Group's *Taste of Broadway* production at Markham Little Theatre Oct. 26. They will play *Timon and Pumbaa* in the *Lion King* portion of the show.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Stouffville's Brendan Belo performed on the most recent Mini Pops Kids CD. He comes from a very musical family.

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