

# The Joy of Music

Longwood teen singer-songwriter shares herself through her original music.

By Michele G. Hudson

“My first words were a song,” says **Carly Jo Jackson**, a spunky, blonde 17-year-old graduate of Lake Brantley High School. “When I was little I was convinced that I was a songwriter. I wrote deep things and at age five gave myself the stage name, Scella Bella.”

Carly Jo is still writing and performing her own original songs but not just for her own benefit. She does it to give to the community too.

Once her parents, **Tim** and **Jo Ann**, saw how important it was to Carly Jo, how talented she was and that she wanted to share it with others for the pure joy of it, they were behind her 100 percent.

She gave up playing the French horn in Teague Middle School’s band to join chorus and proved she could sing during a solo performance at the school’s media center-café. When Carly Jo began vocal training with **Doug Bailey**, owner of The Pop Shop—a performing arts school for children and young adults located in **Longwood**—her talent blossomed. At age 14, Carly Jo took third place in Orlando’s Got Talent.

While developing her voice, Carly Jo had ideas for songs but didn’t have the tools to bring her own music to life. Receiving a guitar on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday changed all that as she learned to play and began concentrating more seriously on her songwriting gift. Her talent for crafting original songs, as well as her performance ability, caught the ear of a record label executive who heard Carly Jo sing at a friend’s party.

“Carly Jo has a vocal and performance style far beyond her years and reminds me of more seasoned artists such as Sheryl Crow and Bonnie Raitt,” says **Rick Perry**, CEO of Orlando-based Arch Productions, LLC.

Carly Jo strives to sing “catchy songs that hold up well in a performance.” She croons a variety of musical styles, including soft rock, hip-hop and acoustic, and will not say “no” to a genre. “The best time for me to write the most clever rhymes is during the height of emotion. Math class was also a time I found myself writing,” Carly Jo giggles.



SUSAN JEFFERS PHOTOGRAPHY

Singer/songwriter Carly Jo Jackson performs often at local charities.

Her songs are drawn from real life experience and come “straight from the heart.”

Involved in numerous charity functions, Carly Jo’s favorite benefit is Camp Boggy Creek because “performing a song with the kids and giving back is the greatest feeling in the world.” She also performs at retirement homes, cafés, festivals and other venues where she can touch a life. “I love it when people listen to my songs and ask me about them. I am not scared to do anything—act a fool in front of people. I asked the audience for a quarter when I needed a guitar pick. When things don’t go right it’s the perfect opportunity to let people see how you can handle something and show your personality.” **L**

To find out more about Carly Jo Jackson and her latest music, go to our website at [CentralFloridaLifestyle.com](http://CentralFloridaLifestyle.com).