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## 5 questions for... Johanna Sillanpaa

**Heath McCoy, Calgary Herald**

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Preview

Johanna Sillanpaa will be performing with Beady Belle on June 26 at Quincy's on 7th as part of the Calgary Jazz Festival. See [calgaryjazz.com](http://calgaryjazz.com)

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### **Jazz artist Johanna Sillanpaa.**

**Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald**



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**Q:** Growing up in Sweden you had quite the music career developing. You were performing in night clubs and on cruise ships by the age of 14 and you were offered two recording contracts by the time you were 16. Why did you give all that up to come to Canada?

**A:** It was a family move that brought me to Canada (in 1992). My mother and my sister live here. Things were going very well for me, granted, and in hindsight you wonder what would've happened if you stayed. . . . But the (recording contract) conditions weren't ideal for me at that young age. There were people concerned that maybe it wasn't in my best interest.

Q: What turned you on to music at such a young age?

A: There was a pop singer when I was growing named Carola. She's been famous in Sweden for 20 or 30 years now and she first broke through when she was 16. She really inspired me. I used to sit in front of a mirror with my hair brush and sing her songs and by about 11 I started competing in lots of star search type competitions. . . . But my jazzy influences came when I was studying music at Grant MacEwan (in Edmonton).

Q: This album is produced by guitarist Aaron Young. You're also part of an acoustic duo with him called Sillan & Young. How important has Aaron been to your career?

A: Aaron's my brother. He doesn't know it, but he is. I've been working with him since 2003. . . . I had mainly worked with piano players up to that point, but I thought 'Well, this will be refreshing.' Then the music just started writing itself. It was like opening a door. . . . He's helped shape my sound. He introduced me to rootsy, folky stuff that I wasn't very well versed in and he taught me about crafting songs. . . .

We're playing together at the Montreal Jazz Festival (on June 27) with our whole band. It's definitely a highlight of my career. I'm told the crowd could range from 20,000 to 50,000.

Q: Sillan & Young had a song featured on the CBS TV series Joan of Arcadia. If you could similarly elevate one song from your new solo album Good Life, which one would it be?

A: I'd take the song Suck It Up and put it on The Bachelorette as the men are leaving once they're voted off.

Q: You mentioned you're headed to IKEA after this interview. Does IKEA ever make you feel homesick?

A: Yes. I walk around the Swedish food aisle and sing the national anthem. Then I have a (Swedish) meatball in the cafeteria. OK, actually I'm looking for some patio furniture.

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