

# And now for something completely different:

# HEEBONICS

## Singer fills the musical gap for kids

By Rita Poliakov  
Staff Reporter

**W**hen Marlowe Stone went through a breakup, she wouldn't write poetry. She'd write music.

"A lot of people find an escape in music," the singer/song writer said. "I definitely see it as a therapy. It's just very healing... When I was a teen, if I had a bad day or a breakup, I'd always have a moment when I'd say to myself, 'That's ok, 'cuz I'm going to write a good song.' And I always did."

Stone, who released her debut CD in 2001, has been a singer since she was very young. As a child, she would create concerts for her parents, belting out songs she had written about love and searching for a man.

"It just felt like that was my thing. It was always the thing I knew made me extra special, even in public school," she said.

After high school, the singer went to Ryerson University's radio and television arts program.

"I knew all I wanted to do was music, but I needed to have a real career," she said.

Still, she made sure to stay involved with the musical community. After going into advertising, Stone switched to music reporting and worked behind the scenes for eNow and CTV, all the while continuing to write music.

In 1999, Stone moved to Chicago with her fiancé and started to focus on her song-writing, which culminated in her self-produced CD, *Blue Satin Dress*.

"I ended up with a CD that was very influenced by Chicago. It had a lot of bluesy, jazzy undertones and I loved it," she said.

But radio stations didn't. At first.



Marlowe Stone

"The only thing was that when I came back to Canada to release it, a lot of the record labels told me they loved the songs and writing but didn't feel like horns and strings had a place on pop radio," she said.

This changed after Norah Jones's songs hit the radio a year later. During that time, Stone won a song-writing contest on Mix 99.9, and later had a music video air on Much More Music.

Then, in the same year, she got pregnant with her first child.

As Stone transitioned into motherhood, she started realizing that there's a gap in children's music.

"The first thing that I realized is how much kids in general love learning about music," she said.

"There's a lot of kids' music that was kiddy, and understandably so, for ages one to four... [Musicians] would do it with balloons, makeup, speaking really slowly, and I started to realize that kids are just growing up faster."

Stone noticed that three- and four-year-olds didn't necessarily enjoy that kind of music, but their parents didn't feel comfortable letting them listen to contemporary pop songs.

"[My sons, aged five and eight,] started to say, 'We don't want to watch the Wiggles anymore. We don't like Disney songs,'" she said. "One father described it to me as being music-less."

This is what drove Stone to focus on a different demographic – kids who are too young for Miley Cyrus but too old for the Wiggles.

"I have a nice network of amazing pop record producers in the city of Toronto. When I approached one or two of them, it was really great. I didn't have to say we're working on a kids' project," she said.

While aiming at younger kids, Stone, who has been working on this concept for around a year, didn't want change anything about the sound of her music, which she describes as a mix of genres, like dance pop and pop rock.

"It was like, I don't want [producers] to do anything different than what [they] would do if [they] were producing this new pop star. That's the approach I've taken," she said.

The only difference is that Stone's songs aren't about sex and drugs, but about local heroes and positive messages.

While Stone's new band, called Marlowe and the Mix, has yet to release a CD, she has a song on iTunes and hopes to launch Marlowe and the Mix through live concerts in the fall.

"I'm not pretending to be something. I'm just being Marlowe Stone, the song writer. Even some of the songs that will be on Marlowe and the Mix CDs were songs I wrote four or five years ago," she said.

"They're just kid-friendly enough. They're 'poppy' enough. They're not depressing or sexual. I don't write music like that anyways."

For Stone, who wrote the song *Step by Step* for the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Walk with Israel this year, music is an essential part of a child's life.

"I think there's something so pure about music, and I've seen with my own eyes, even at a birthday party, the minute you turn the music on, it changes the whole energy of the room. Everybody's giggling and smiling," she said.

"It really does something amazing for children. A lot of people find an escape in music, or they find comfort in listening to music. As young as you can expose kids to it, the better [it is]."

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