

WHO'S NEXT

STEPH MACPHERSON

HOMETOWN: Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
INFLUENCES: Bob Dylan, Fleetwood Mac, Joni Mitchell
ALBUM: *Bells & Whistles*, out now
WEBSITE: stephmacpherson.com

AS A CHILD IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, STEPH MACPHERSON entertained family and friends by singing along with pop divas Madonna and Tiffany and Disney movies like *The Little Mermaid*. Soon she began taking piano and voice lessons. "I loved creating sounds," she says. "My parents told me that as a small child I'd yell and squeal for no other reason than the sheer joy of using my voice." By high school she'd learned how to play guitar, which led to performing in bars and restaurants around her hometown.

After serving as a featured act for folk musician Zachary Lucky in 2009, Macpherson moved to Vancouver and entered a number of national singing competitions. She first gained prominent exposure after winning the grand prize in an online talent search—a performance slot at Lilith Fair. Appearing alongside a coterie of established female stars—including headliners Sarah McLachlan, Erykah Badu

and Sheryl Crow—had a profound impact on the fledgling artist. "I had no idea going into it how much I had to learn, the people I needed to meet, and the growth and vision I needed to work toward," she says. She parlayed that victory into a series of gigs on the Canadian festival circuit.

Macpherson wrote all 10 songs in her debut album, *Bells & Whistles*, and recorded them in her graceful, understated style. She recently completed a West Coast tour in support of its U.S. release—and credits an eclectic roster of collaborators for improving her career prospects. "I still can't believe how lucky I am and how much support I receive from so many different sources," she says. "People are continually placing their time, energy and funding behind me and my efforts. I am incredibly grateful. That support allows me to keep doing what I love, so life is pretty sweet."