

# JAYLA

## JAYLA HERNANDEZ

BY JOANNA GUTIERREZ  
PHOTO BY MELISSA PAK COATS

Fact: Jayla Hernandez is adorable. This precocious 9 year old picked up the drums at her cousin's house, on a drum set she felt was rather neglected. Instantly, she was hooked. Her favorite part of her drum kit is the bass drum because of the sound it makes. "Drumming makes me feel so excited. When I hit the drums the sound is so exciting to me," she says. She also loves to perform. While she mainly plays alone, drumming and singing at the same time, she's played in a few girl bands at Girls Rock Camp. She has yet to find a more permanent band, but she's already got the name picked out for when she does: Sugar Drop. Until then she's happy jamming on her own to her favorite songs by Nicki Minaj and Beyoncé. While she wants to be a famous drummer when she grows up, there's one audience in particular that she really wants to play for. "If I could play anywhere in the world, I would play in Cuba where my brothers and sister live so they could hear me play," she says. Cue the awwwws and watch out for Jayla in the future!



# MARLHY

## MARLHY MURPHY

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
BONNIE GRADILLAS QUIGLEY

"When she was two years old, Marlhy would carry two plastic Easter eggs around the house and beat them together in perfect rhythm." According to her mom, Wendy, Marlhy Murphy has always been a drummer. Her innate talent really showed, though, when she was six, during her first game of Rock Band, where she scored in the 90 to 100 percentile. Soon, her parents signed her up for "real" drum lessons, at School of Rock Dallas. She's now nine years old, a slip of a girl whose stature belies her maturity and intense drive.

"She doesn't want to be good 'for a girl.' You can see in her eyes she wants to be the best, with no qualifiers," said Terry Longhway, co-owner of several School of Rock (SoR) franchises, one of them Marlhy's Dallas location, as well as drummer for local band The Nicholsons. "To say she is beyond her years is such an understatement! I've witnessed her practicing for hours and what I love most about her is that she doesn't take shortcuts."

Proving her precociousness, Marlhy first rocked an iconic song by her favorite band



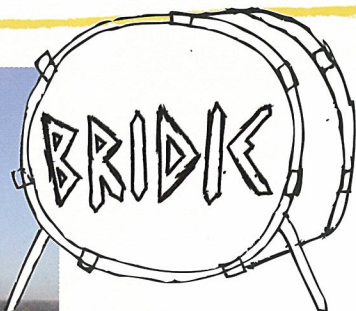
two years ago at age seven...in front of 18,000 people at a Dallas Stars hockey game.

"I will never forget it," said Dean Tarpley, Longhway's SoR business partner. "Like many who see her when she walks to the drum kit, the 18,000 people there applauded when she was shown on the jumbotron. It was obvious they thought she was cute and probably expected her to be a novelty act. When she started playing Led Zepelin's 'Immigrant Song' and her feet could barely reach the foot pedals, the crowd erupted."

Besides playing for SoR's Advanced band, Marlhy drums in two others, We're Not Dudes (best name ever for an all-girls band?) and the Zeppos (Zeppelin tribute band), both formed with fellow SoR students.

Performing on stage, said Marlhy, is what it's all about. "I don't know the right noun for it, I mean adjective. Excitement. Yeah, excitement! I work really hard, and it's nice to get that recognition."

NAME: MARLHY MURPHY  
AGE: 9  
HOMETOWN: DALLAS, TX  
LIVES IN: DALLAS, TX  
BUT SPENDS PART OF THE YEAR IN LOS ANGELES, CA  
PAST BANDS: VARIOUS SCHOOL OF ROCK SEASON BANDS  
CURRENT BANDS: WE'RE NOT DUDES AND ZEPPOS  
FAVORITE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL: MATH AND GEOGRAPHY  
OTHER HOBBIES: PLAYING KEYBOARD, BASS AND SEWING  
YEARS DRUMMING: 3



## BRIDIE STAGG



Typically at age 10, one might do their debut or grade 1 exam. But at age 10, Bridie Stagg from Yorkshire achieved a distinction on her grade 4 exam from Rockscool. This accomplishment is no mean feat. Rockscool is Europe's leading rock and pop music exam board offering accredited qualifications up to grade 8. The grades are also examined in Australia, Asia, Canada, Africa and Mexico gaining

an international reputation. In addition to playing three pieces to backing tracks of various styles, the exams consist of snare rudiments, an improvisation component, listening tests and theoretical questions. A daunting prospect for anyone let alone a 10 year old!

Yet Bridie seems unfazed. At just a few months old she would light up whenever she heard music. Her mother was convinced she'd be a dancer until age 6 when a family friend sat her on his drum kit. After only 15 minutes she was playing a groove!

On her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday she was presented with her own drum kit. Though left-

handed, she started out drumming "open" on a right-handed kit. By the age of 9 she learned to play crossed. Now she can switch her lead hand to suit and is quite ambidextrous.

She started going to local jam nights for teenage musicians. The first time she walked on stage, someone said, "But she's just a little kid!" However, once she played Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Everlong" by the Foo Fighters, she was accepted on the spot. Off stage she can be quite a shy child—although this is hardly evident when she's performing. Bridie loves her music and maintains a happy mix of serious learning, jamming and meeting new friends through

drumming. Her regular tuition includes some rigorous and demanding studies and she practices between 30 to 60 minutes everyday. It's not uncommon for her to play up to two hours on the weekends.

Most recently she has joined a band. Her band mates are 15 and 16 years old. They met at the local jam night and have a couple of small pub gigs in the pipeline. Bridie plans to continue her drum exams to the highest level of grade 8. At her current rate of speed she could complete this by the time she's 14. She one day hopes to be a session musician, work in a touring band, and help to prove that girls can play drums as good as any guy!

Kasey Peters

