

## Heather Bambrick Gets Up For It

*Singer's a hit after six months as Jazz FM morning DJ, but to quote a standard, she works "night and day."*

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"It's honest and innocent with just a hint of cheek," says Heather Bambrick, echoing words that others use to describe her. But she's not talking about her persona, or her favourite Rogers and Hart tune. She's talking about the friends she spends every morning with: Rose, Blanche, Dorothy and Sophia.

At 5 a.m. each weekday, before Bambrick heads off to host Jazz FM's morning show, she watches *The Golden Girls* on TV, drinking in the wisecracks. This is how she prepares herself for four hours of anchoring the show five days a week — and many days don't end there.

Sometimes, she will have been performing late into the night with the Heather Bambrick Quartet, singing with the trio Broadway or hosting an event. But at 6 a.m. she's all cheer, and her bosses should be pleased as well. The Newfoundland-born singer, who trained at the University of Toronto before hitting the road with big bands and all-female singing group, is being credited by her bosses with improving ratings. Bambrick draws listeners in with her colourful and upbeat, outgoing personality, which matches the vitality of the corkscrew red curls cascading down her shoulders. (She used to try to tame that mane, put it in ponytails or up in clips, but she's given up and lets it be "my trademark.")

She exuberantly puts all the emphasis on "up" in the show's title *Wake Up . . . With Heather Bambrick*. Conversation is peppered with jokes and anecdotes. She says she got into music because she wasn't good at math — "All I have to do is count to four and the band comes in."

The award-winning broadcaster and singer is juggling a host of gigs from the radio job to numerous voices she portrays in animated shows to concerts. Royal Jelly bandleader Jaymz Bee hired Bambrick and her four-person singing group, The Beehive Singers, to tour with him when she was at U of T 16 years ago.

"She's always been a great entertainer and an awesome singer," says Bee, adding that it is not surprising that the two ended up on radio surrounded by music they love.

The sheer joy Bambrick brings to everyday life is a common theme of the jazz community. "We did nothing but laugh," remembers singer Carol Welsman. "It was obvious from the beginning she had oodles of talent."

And loyal. One of her oldest friends is Valerie Long of St. John's, who taught Bambrick when she was a student in high school. Bambrick wowed her by volunteering at 16 to sing scat (improvisation) during a concert. "She was brave," says Long, who listens to the show on her computer, adding that her radio personality is no different than Heather elsewhere. "There's sweetness with a wink that she bring to performances and her life."

Bambrick sounds "like a smart next door neighbour," says Ross Porter, CEO and president of Jazz FM. "She has an interesting outlook on life, she's intelligent. She's a really likeable person. She puts people at ease."

Bambrick says she got her positive attitude and sense of fun from family and growing up on The Rock.

"My Dad is a very positive person. He says that each day we rise, we should first be thankful for another day. I also think very strongly that my attitude comes from my background as a Newfoundlander. We are very humourous, resilient, fun-loving people. Plus we love music, storytelling, and good times. That's what I grew up with. That's who I am."