

## Seminole teen moves to Hollywood round

By TIFFANY RAZZANO

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SEMINOLE – Though her performance wasn't televised during the audition rounds of "American Idol," Seminole High School's Angela Rodriguez received a coveted golden ticket to move on to the show's Hollywood round.

The 15-year-old was one of around 200 performers – as well as the youngest – to make it to the next level. Episodes from this portion of the competition will air on Fox during the first week of February.

Angela, who was last seen on Telemundo's "La Voz Kids" in 2013, made it through the producer rounds in Tallahassee to perform for the celebrity judges – Jennifer Lopez, Keith Urban and Harry Connick, Jr. – in Kansas City, Missouri in August.

"It's so bright in there. The only thing I remember is Harry Connick Jr.'s piercing blue eyes," Angela said.

She sang one of her go-to songs – Christina Aguilera's version of Etta James' "Something's Got a Hold on Me" – to earn her golden ticket from the judges.

For those wondering, she said, "You have to give the golden ticket back. It's really frustrating, because I wanted to keep it.

Both Angela and her mother, Belkis, were surprised the teen has done so well during her first time auditioning for "American Idol."

"I didn't expect to make it this far," Angela said.

Belkis added, "I'm really surprised. Not because she isn't a great singer, but because she's only 15. She just turned 15. And she's competing against really mature voices."

She's staying mum on how she does during the Hollywood round, but has several projects keeping her busy.

This past summer, Angela was selected to attend the Grammy Museum Music Revolution



Seminole High School sophomore Angela Rodriguez auditions for the judges. She has made it through the initial "American Idol" auditions to the show's Hollywood round. Those episodes will begin airing on Fox during the first week of February.

Project, a summer music program for aspiring teen musicians.

It was there that she learned how to write her own songs.

"I didn't understand how to song write until then," she said. "Now, it's like tell me what to write about and in an hour I'll have a song."

The program is also where she formed her band, 3rd Degree, which has performed at the Angry Pepper in Madeira Beach and Beach Fyre BBQ Grille in Clearwater Beach.

She also teamed up with sibling musicians Skyler and Phoebe Golden, who live in Pass-a-Grille and own the rights to "The Story of Life," the last known lyrics written by 1960s rock icon Jimi Hendrix. The lyrics were found on his body when he overdosed in 1970.

Skyler wrote and arranged the music to go with the lyrics, and after meeting her in the Grammy program, he asked Angela to sing on the song and record it with them.

"It just hit me last week: oh my gosh, I'm singing this Jimi Hendrix song," she said. "It's a really beautiful song."

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/AngelaRodriguezMusic](https://www.facebook.com/AngelaRodriguezMusic).

## Local teen appears on American Idol

By TIFFANY RAZZANO

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SEMINOLE – When “American Idol” kicks off its 14th season Wednesday, Jan. 7 and Thursday, Jan. 8, Seminole residents will be able to catch a glimpse of a familiar face.

Seminole High School sophomore Angela Rodriguez auditioned for the show this past summer, and her tryout will air at some point during the reality program’s initial auditions weeks.

The teen was last seen on Telemundo’s “La Voz Kids” in 2013. She made it into the show’s top 18 finalists and worked closely with Prince Royce, a Latin pop songwriter, musician and producer.

Angela turned 15 in March, the age limit cutoff for “American Idol,” said her mother, Belkis Rodriguez. So the mother and daughter headed to Tallahassee in July for an open audition – “the cattle call,” Belkis said – where Angela was one of the youngest performers competing for a spot on the show.

“You’re surrounded by people,” she said.

“There are so many people. Everyone is singing, like screaming their lungs out, and it’s like, ‘Oh my gosh, these people are really, really good.’”

Her mother suggested she join in the impromptu performances with the other singers around her.

“I told her, ‘This is fun. This is part of the whole experience,’” Belkis said.

But Angela declined.

“Normally, I’d start jamming and singing out loud, but then I realized you could lose your voice. So I played it smart,” she said.

Instead, she decided to practice alone in their car. But nothing went right for her when she got there. So she called her mother from the parking lot as her nerves got the better of her.



Photo courtesy of MOLLY O’GARA  
Seminole’s Angela Rodriguez, 15, performs for the judges during auditions for Season 14 of “American Idol.”

"I told her, 'My voice just isn't working,'" she said, "because I freaked out so much."

Her mother helped to calm her down, and by the time she got in front of the executive producers to sing one of her go-to songs – Christina Aguilera's version of Etta James' "Something's Got a Hold on Me" – she was one of just a few singers who made it to the next round in Kansas City, Missouri.

A month later, Belkis and Angela headed to Kansas City, where Angela sang for executive producers two more times before performing for the show's celebrity judges.

She almost didn't make it there though, because she "was freaking out so much" during her final audition for the producers, she said. "I hate small crowds and there were only five or six people in there. I can only sing in front of big crowds. So I get in there and I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, they're all looking at me.'"

The producers were split on her performance.

"Two or three really liked me and two or three were like, 'You're not ready,'" Angela said. "So I heard, 'No.' I shook their hands, said, 'Thank you for the opportunity,' and I left. I had to stay strong in front of them."

By the time she left the room, though, she was "bawling [her] eyes out" and searching for her mother.

But the producers had a change of heart, and asked her to sing for them again.

"They really like to keep the emotions high," Angela said.

She drank some water – "because when you cry your voice kind of shuts down," she said – collected herself and sang "Brand New Me" by Alicia Keys for the producers. She was quickly passed through to the judges.

"They said that the reason they let me pass is that they feel what I sing," Angela said. "I guess that I get my emotion across."

Next, she sang for the judges, Jennifer Lopez, Harry Connick Jr. and Keith Urban.

"I don't remember a thing," she said. "It's like a dream. You go in and you go right back out, and you're like, what just happened."

Family and friends keep asking her how the audition went and what the judges said to her.

"All I can say is I don't remember," Angela said. "It's so bright in there. The only thing I remember is Harry Connick Jr.'s piercing blue eyes."

As for whether she advances to the next round or not, "you'll just have to watch and find out," she said.

She'll perform with her new band, Third Degree, Thursday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m., at Beach Fyre BBQ Grille, 608 N. Mandalay Ave., Clearwater Beach.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/AngelaRodriguezMusic](http://www.facebook.com/AngelaRodriguezMusic).

## Stars in her eyes

### Seminole teen competes on La Voz Kids

By TIFFANY RAZZANO

Article published on Tuesday, July 30, 2013

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Photo courtesy of BELKIS RODRIGUEZ

Following her turn on Telemundo's "La Voz Kids," singer Angela Rodriguez plans to study theater arts at Gibbs High School. The Seminole teen is also looking for a songwriter to collaborate with as she hones her vocal skills.



Photo courtesy of BELKIS RODRIGUEZ

Angela Rodriguez, 14, is one of 18 finalists on

SEMINOLE – Angela Rodriguez, 14, always knew she wanted to be a star.

the first season of Telemundo's "La Voz Kids" singing competition.

So she jumped at the chance to compete on Telemundo's "La Voz Kids," a televised Spanish-language singing competition with a global reach.

Though she was eliminated from the program on July 14, Rodriguez, one of 18 finalists on the show, isn't downtrodden. If anything, it left her hungry for more.

"It was such an amazing experience, singing on TV," she said. "It was such a cool experience."

Two weeks ago, when the Seminole teen came home from Miami, where the show was filmed, she was more certain than ever that one day she wants to turn her passion for music into a career.

Now she needs to figure out the next steps to take, said her mother, Belkis Rodriguez, before the buzz begins to fade.

"During the auditions, you hear about all of the opportunities from doing a show like this," Belkis said.

But she said reality hit home after they met DeAndre Brackensick, who placed eighth on the 11th season of "American Idol," when he performed at the Largo Southwest Recreation Complex in June. He doled out advice for the young singer/reality show competitor and her mother. The key is hard work, he told them, because success is never guaranteed.

"The reality is here is a guy who three years ago was in the top 10 on 'American Idol,'" Belkis said. "And he's out there knocking on doors, feet on the pavement, busting his butt."

But Angela – who just graduated from Seminole Middle School and is about to enter her freshman year at Gibbs High School, where she'll study theater arts – is eager to put in the work. Even prior to La Voz, she had her priorities straight, her mother said. She sings every day, often training with a vocal coach, and turns down plans that interfere with her practice or that might strain her voice.

And Belkis continues to reinforce the hard work that goes into a singing career, but said her daughter is a born performer.

Belkis recalls a 5-year-old with a powerhouse voice, who would sing over her kindergarten classmates much to her teacher and family's amazement.

"All we could say was, 'Oh my gosh' when we heard her sing. But she didn't know how to use her voice," Belkis said. "We would laugh because she would overpower everyone else."

Angela took vocal lessons and learned the nuances of her range, how to take control of her voice. And she grew to love performers like Christina Aguilera, Adele, Pink, Bruno Mars – all popular singers who care more about musicianship than panache.

And one of her all-time favorites is the classic Etta James. While auditioning for "La Voz Kids," Angela, channeled James during the first round, held back in January, singing "Something's Got a Hold on Me." Then, after telling producers how much James inspires

her, they asked her to sing "At Last."

There was one problem though: she didn't know all the words.

"I felt like they were trying to trick me," she said. "I just tried not to panic."

She managed to stay composed, and quickly scanned a sheet of lyrics before performing. Whenever she couldn't remember the words, she just sang, "doo, doo, doo."

The producers were still impressed and called her in for a second round, where she was asked to sing a Spanish-language song. This was only the second time Angela, whose family is Cuban, sang in Spanish for an audience.

This earned her a spot in the "blind" competition, which was aired live on Telemundo. During this round, the three coaches – Prince Royce, Paulina Rubio and Roberto Tapia – chose contestants for their respective teams. Just like the English-language version of "The Voice" for adults, the coaches sat with their backs to the singers, so they chose them based on talent alone. If they were interested in a performer, they hit a buzzer, and their seat whirled around to face them.

During Angela's performance – she sang "When I Was Your Man" by Mars – Prince Royce and Rubio reached for their buzzers. When forced to pick between the two, she went with Prince Royce simply "because he turned around first," she said. But more importantly, growing up in a Cuban household, Angela was exposed to salsa, merengue, bachata – genres in which he has made a name for himself.

And at 24, Prince Royce could easily relate to the teen singer.

"He's young, so he knew how to explain things to me," Angela said.

Prior to the show, Angela considered herself primarily a ballad singer. But during the competition she was dealt mostly uptempo songs. Though out of her comfort zone, she turned this into a positive experience.

"I learned how to work the stage, how to move," she said. "Now that I know how to move, I don't want to sing a ballad again."

She also made what she hopes will be lifelong friendships with other young, up-and-coming performers.

"It was really cool being surrounded by people who like to do the same thing as you," she said. "I think they understand you better."

Now, as the straight-A student is about to begin high school, she contemplates her future career. She knows she needs to lay the groundwork now.

She's seeking a songwriter to collaborate with and hopes to learn how to write music herself. She records videos of herself singing and uploads them to YouTube. On Aug. 17, she'll perform at La Feria de la Familia, a festival in Orlando. And she's recording the vocals for demos written by Sarasota-based musician Jeff Thal.

For more information about Angela, visit [www.angelarodriguezmusic.com](http://www.angelarodriguezmusic.com) or [www.facebook.com/angelarodriguezmusic](https://www.facebook.com/angelarodriguezmusic).

## Artist of the day: Angela Rodriguez

Monday, July 8, 2013 7:00am

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One of the greatest things about being 14 years old and getting cast on Telemundo's version of *The Voice*?

"They fly us (everywhere)," said **Angela Rodriguez**, the teenager from Seminole who has made it to the final episodes of *La Voz Kids*. "I never had anyone pay for my flight before. It was so cool!"

Angela's lengthy audition process resulted in her joining the team led by singer-songwriter and producer Prince Royce. On Sunday, the incoming freshman at the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School competed against 17 other competitors on the show.

LA VOZ KIDS

## **Para Ángela Rodríguez su refugio es la música. La Voz Kids. (VIDEO)**

Espera poder llegar lejos en la competencia para demostrarle a su familia el talento que tiene

<http://www.telemundo.com/shows/2013/05/04/para-angela-rodriguez-su-refugio-es-la-musica-la-voz-kids-video?page=2>

LA VOZ KIDS

## **Ángela Rodríguez del Team Royce canta Adios le Pido, Primera Temporada. La Voz Kids (VIDEO)**

La niña finalista del Team Royce lo entregó todo en el escenario con el tema de Juanes en el primer show en vivo.

<http://www.telemundo.com/shows/2013/07/06/angela-rodriguez-del-team-royce-canta-adios-le-pido-primera-temporada-la-voz-kids?page=1>

**Angela, su trayectoria en "La Voz Kids"**

**4** /22 Ángela Rodríguez del Team Royce y sus mejores momentos en fotos durante la competencia musical.

<http://www.telemundo.com/shows/2013/07/15/angela-su-trayectoria-en-la-voz-kids?image=3454656>