

# Hollie goes lightly in fame bid

## Mom keeps Brit talent show star grounded

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Even at the tender age of 11, TV talent show sensation Hollie Steel wants to spread opera music to the world, and today in Hong Kong she will be doing just that.

Hollie became a household name in Britain after her first televised performance of *I Could Have Danced All Night* from the musical *My Fair Lady* on the UK show *Britain's Got Talent*.

Her performance stunned the audience and the four-judge panel headed by bad-boy impresario Simon Cowell — who she calls a teddy bear.

The little opera singer with a big voice finished sixth and has been touring the United Kingdom with fellow finalists including older singing sensation Susan Boyle. “She [Boyle] is very nice, and we write letters to each other,” Hollie told *The Standard*.

Hollie’s fame has certainly traveled — locals swamped her for autographs when she visited Ocean Park.

Her mother Nina Steel, a 38-year-old audiologist, described the road to fame as unimaginably stressful but said she will do everything she can to help her daughter cope and not fall into the drink and drugs trap like so many other child stars.

“I believe Hollie is just as good as Charlotte Church [who rose to fame in childhood as a classical crossover singer before branching into pop music],” Steel said.



When she cried on UK TV, then recovered to sing like an angel, Hollie Steel stole a nation’s heart.

“But I’m very strict. She will never have a chance to get into drug or drinking problems.”

She wants Hollie to lead an ordinary life and continue her studies at an ordinary school.

Although she has been taking about five to six days off school for performances each month, she has not fallen behind in school work.

Hollie’s first single will be released this Christmas and she has also been working on her first album, which includes opera as well as movie theme songs such as *When She Loved Me* from *Toy Story 2*.

Hollie says her goal is to release both pop and opera albums.

“When I turn 16, I will audition for *The X Factor* [another singing contest for aspiring grown-up pop singers].”

Hollie is not the first child made famous by *Britain's Got Talent*. Connie Talbot, now nine, has released three albums so far and is loved by many here.

Hollie makes her Hong Kong singing debut at Lok Fu Shopping Centre this afternoon.

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