

The Biggest Little Singer-Songwriter Competition, Showcase, and Benefit

BY NATALIE LERNER | PHOTO CREDIT: KERRI CLARK DESIGNS, LLC



"Some of the largest breakout stars and acts have come from Houston," said HoustonLive founder, Tracy DeJarnett.

Houston has bred the talent of legends like ZZ Top, Beyoncé, Lyle Lovett and even Kenny Rogers. With a track record of musical success, and being such a richly populated and culturally diverse city, Tracy strongly believes that Houston will be producing some of the world's next big stars. If Tracy has anything to say about it, Houston will soon be right up there with Nashville or Los Angeles when it comes to being a widely known and respected music city.

"Houston is actually working on getting certified as a 'Music Friendly' city through the Texas Music Office," Tracy shared. Her excitement was evident as she poured over her assistance in that mission, as well as her overall mission to support and elevate local singer-songwriters into the next big step in their careers. For years Tracy has hosted local events for top talent, ranging from front porch music performances to large music festivals.

A huge action step toward becoming a music friendly city, however, involves Songfest, Houston's biggest little singer-songwriter competition, showcase, and benefit. Tracy's company, HoustonLive, in partnership with local hot spot, JP Hops House, produce the event. At Songfest, our region's musical mavens are presented with the chance to showcase their musical works of art before a live audience! Five finalists, plus a sixth "Wild Card" as Tracy put it, move on to a finale performance opening for a big-name headliner downtown at McIntyre's. Some past participants have gotten record deals, and this year's event might just echo the same.

The upcoming Songfest on April 30th will be held at JP Hops House, just as it has been for the past three years. The venue hosts live music throughout the week, and even the Houston Songwriters Association on Sundays, so it is already a well-known dig for local music enthusiasts and those in the songwriter biz. The JP Hops House owner, Pam Herndon, is known for her big heart for the music community. It was only

logical for Tracy to partner with such a person and venue.

Songfest not only supports local artists, but it carries on the work of the Stephens and Pruett Ranch Foundation. Jim Stephens was a radio DJ in the 1980s who dedicated his life to find safe houses for foster kids. The foundation now owns 38 acres in Rosharon where foster kids find refuge and healing by taking care of rescued horses during their stay. Tracy first became involved with them when she was looking for a place to host a family-friendly music festival. She is now on the board and enjoys being able to help grow such an undertaking.

Hosting more family-friendly music events that support the next generation of talent are of importance to Tracy. Although the upcoming Songfest is for ages 21 and up, the Rising Star Showcase for those in the younger age brackets will be right behind it, so stay tuned.

Whether to participate or to spectate, check out houstonlive.tv/songfest22, [facebook.com/SongfestTX](https://www.facebook.com/SongfestTX), or Instagram [@newhoustonlivetv](https://www.instagram.com/newhoustonlivetv).



Stratford High School had an amazing return to ComedySportz this semester against Tompkins and Morton Ranch!

25 Second Baptist School students were chosen to compete in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo School Art Program. Students from their lower, middle and upper school brought home ribbons. Fourth grader Kendal came away with one of the greatest honors — Best of Show!

Congratulations to St. Thomas High School student Keenan Sencio-Sims for his recognition for 25th Annual National K-12 Ceramic Exhibition!

