

Ambassador to the stars

Local singer given honour of performing at Monaco film festival

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Ottawa Sun

Ottawa singer/songwriter Michaela Foster Marsh is always looking for a sign her mother — who died from ovarian cancer last year — is watching over her.

When she was chosen to be the ambassador for the Monaco International Film Festival, Dec. 7-10, it seems she got one.

"The main significance for me is my mom ... after mom died I would go into her bed. I just decided to find out what film she'd been watching," Foster Marsh told the Sun from her native Glasgow yesterday. "And it was *The Grace Kelly Story*."

Foster Marsh's mom loved the actress-turned-Princess of Monaco, and even bore a striking

resemblance to her when she was young.

The honour is also a sign a music career delayed for years when she first lost her father and then her mother fell ill is steadily humming along.

Festival director Rosana Golden says Foster Marsh as an individual was a good representation of the essence of the festival's top prize, the Angel Award, praising her sultry folk sound, "astounding lyrics" and calling her a "symbol of peace, harmony and positive energy."

Foster Marsh was introduced to the Monaco festival organizers through Sony Bridges, the co-pro-

ducer of Oran Mor, in Glasgow, where she released her second CD, *I Undid Orion's Belt*, earlier

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Michaela Foster Marsh

this year. Bridges ran into them at the Cannes Film Festival and proceeded to promote her talents.

Fatal fire

Foster Marsh has overcome even more than losing her mom and dad; in the early 1990s her younger brother Frankie died in a house fire. The experience prompted her to write much of her 1998 debut *Fairy Tales and the Death of Innocence*, a move which launched her in the music business after working in fashion and

retail. So far Foster Marsh's music has been used in the 2002 television movie *The Matthew Shepherd Story*, on *Dawson's Creek* and in an upcoming French film.

Foster Marsh, who moved to Ottawa after meeting her future husband on a visit here 15 years ago, will perform at a special Monaco ceremony in the Princess Grace Theatre on Dec. 9.

"At the end I have to do a wee speech and try to look pretty and dress up and mingle with the stars," she said.

Foster Marsh will next return to Ottawa, where she released her CD at the National Arts Centre last month, in January. She'll then get to work recording her next album.

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Michaela Foster Marsh is looking forward to rubbing shoulders with the stars in Monaco.