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Teddy Geiger: New Kid on the Charts

He's toured with Hilary Duff and performed alongside Kelly Clarkson. He was a finalist on VH1's *In Search of the New Partridge Family* and appeared in the CBS music-industry comedy/drama *Love Monkey*. But 18-year-old singer/songwriter Teddy Geiger isn't just another prefab pop star. Equally comfortable on guitar and piano, he wrote a

large percentage of the words and music on his confessional, pop-friendly 2006 Columbia debut, *Underage Thinking*.

Teddy has been performing professionally since age 14 and writing songs even longer. "I wrote my first song when I was six or seven—

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it was called 'Little Tommy Blackbird,'" he recalls with a laugh. "Then I picked up guitar when I was about eight and started writing *actual* songs. At first they were mostly about getting kids on the bus to laugh on our way to school. There was a song called 'Amazingly Fat Cows.' They were kind of ridiculous."

Nowadays Geiger's themes are less silly, but he's still inspired by the world around him. "Honestly, a song can be about anything that's happening," he says. "Being out on tour, being in a lot of different situations, and meeting a lot of people is very inspiring."

Despite his talent, Teddy initially found some aspects of large-scale performance challenging. "I used to be extremely nervous before I went onstage," he confides. "It took a lot of just *doing* it, forcing myself to get up in front of people and play, to get used to it. Being able to talk to the crowd and connect. The Hilary Duff tour last summer actually helped a lot. It was 35 dates at big venues, which is plenty to be nervous about when you're up in front of that kind of audience every night!"

Learning to work in the studio came easier. "It's definitely half the reason I'm involved with music," says Teddy. "I've always been interested in recording as well as music. When I first started playing, I bought a four-track recorder, and just went from there. I tour with a laptop studio, and I have some stuff set up at home too."

Tracking with songwriter/producer Billy Mann (Ricky Martin, Pink) was an especially valuable experience. "It meant a lot to me to be able to see that side of things up close," says Teddy. "I learned a lot of small things from Billy that really helped make it sound better, like how to EQ and compress certain things."

Teddy's album came out mere months ago, but he's already thinking about his next release. "I've been recording demos since we finished the first album," he says. "When I'm at home I have a real piano, so I write there. But for some reason I sometimes find it hard to write on electronic keyboards, so when I'm on the road I usually write on guitar instead."

Teddy plays Yamaha pianos and keyboards onstage and in the studio. "Occasionally we get to bust out a real piano, but on this tour I've been playing an electronic keyboard," he says. "I had a Yamaha S08 synth at my house that I used to use for recording, so we brought that out. I'm also getting the new CP33, but I haven't had a chance to play with it much yet. I like the way it feels and the way it sounds. I guess that's really all you can hope for in a keyboard!"

He's also a fan of the Motif ES8. "The Motif is great for recording as well as live," he says. "We used the Motif when we were tracking the album—the sounds in there are really cool."

In the future, Teddy hopes to become more involved with production in addition to building his recording and acting careers. In the meantime, he feels very clear about how he hopes to communicate via music.

"I think it's important not to worry about what I wanted to say with the songs, but rather to allow listeners to interpret the songs for themselves and make them their own," he explains. "I want to leave a sort of openness in the songs, so that I'm not saying, 'This is my song about such-and-such, so that's what you're going to think about.' One of my favorite artists is Ben Folds, and a lot of his music is very open that way. He doesn't really say exactly what he's talking about; it could be many different things. I like that approach a lot."