

BLASTING OFF WITH THE PULL START ROCKETS

TALK ABOUT LAUNCHING YOUR CAREER with a bang: On the strength of their homespun demos, Pull Start Rockets found themselves in Nashville tracking an entire album with Grammy-winning producer and songwriter Tommy Sims—before the Hamilton, Ontario, quartet had even secured a record deal.

It's not hard to hear why. Both the original demos and the Sims-polished studio tracks (posted at www.pullstartrockets.com and on the band's MySpace and Facebook pages) reveal the group's knack for bright, bouncy, hook-laden guitar pop.

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—CAYMAN PERSICHINI



All four band members are 21 or younger, and all write and sing, though guitarist Cayman Persichini handles most lead vocals. “The way songwriting works for us,” he says, “is that one of us comes to the table with an idea, and then the rest of us put our two cents in. Everyone adds their creativity, which is how we make it our own.”

You might expect a seasoned pro like Sims to push the band towards a slick, commercial sound, but you’d be wrong. “He wanted us to play everything live on the studio floor, just like we were playing a concert,” says Cayman. “Later we overdubbed a few solos and things, but the foundation of the sound is the raw power coming from the band. You can really feel that intensity.”

While most tracks are bright, major-key rockers, the band shifted gears for “Can’t Get You Out of My Head,” a ballad with something extra: a lush orchestration by famed film composer James Newton Howard. “We all knew him from scores he did, like *The Dark Knight* and *Michael Clayton*,” says Cayman. “We were so fortunate to have him make a fully orchestrated piece especially for the song.”

Cayman and lead guitarist Skylar Marshall recorded all their tracks with Yamaha guitars. Cayman used a solidbody Mike Stern and a semi-acoustic SA2200, while Skylar relied chiefly on a double-cutaway SBG2000. The duo made the most of the contrast between their axes. “The SBG has a big, full solidbody tone,” observes Cayman. “The SA doesn’t have quite as high an output, and the tone is distinctive because it resonates through the body a bit more. It can have a nice acoustic-like tone, though we also used real acoustics, like Skylar’s LJX6. We also used an AES1500B, a big-bodied semi-hollow electric.”

The SBG2000 isn’t Skylar’s first Yamaha solidbody. “I started playing on an older version, the SG700,” he says. “That guitar was really good to me, so I jumped at the opportunity to try the newer version. The SBG2000 has really thick, deep tones and a lot of output, which really suits our pop-rock sound. I’m looking forward to taking it out on the road.”

Eric Persichini—Cayman’s 18-year-old brother—was originally a guitarist. “But then,” he recalls, “Cayman came and said, ‘Hey, we need a bassist,’ and I was like, ‘Sure thing!’” Eric recently switched from a four-string bass to a five-string Yamaha BBNE2. “It’s a Nathan East signature model,” he explains. “It’s really nice, with an alder body, a maple top, and a solid alder and mahogany neck through the body. You can feel the sound travel through the whole body, giving it a warmer attack and more tone.”

Rounding out the group is drummer Shawn Tebay. “I recorded with a Yamaha Oak Custom kit,” he reports. “I’d played Yamaha drums before, but never oak ones. They’re unbelievable! They sing louder than any drums I’ve ever played, and they cut through the recordings loud and clear. My snare is an MSD1465, a 14 by 6 ½ maple drum. It has a lot of crack and really cuts through on top, where you need it. It’s versatile, too. A lot of drummers use different snares for recording and the road, but this one sounds great for both. And I have to say that Yamaha hardware is the best ever made. You can adjust things to every possible angle, and it’s incredibly durable. That’s really important when you’re setting up and breaking down constantly on tour.”

Pull Start Rockets are making the most of the interim between finishing their recordings and procuring a deal for them. They’re performing nonstop across Canada and the U.S. as they work hard to cultivate their fan base. “Interacting with our fans and other bands is very important to us,” says Cayman. “We’re on Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter 24/7, interacting with people who have commented on our music. Doing that makes them feel more connected to our music and brings them closer to us. This journey is very exciting for us, and we hope we can inspire our fans to follow us on it!”