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INTERVIEW WITH
ROBYN AND RYLEIGH

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Robyn & Ryleigh

Sisters Robyn Gillespie and Ryleigh Gillespie are a talented emerging country/pop duo hailing from the serene setting of Langley, Canada. Their sound is a reflection of their country upbringing, their favourite musical influences, and traditional country acoustic elements blended with the energy of modern rock

Photo Karolina Turek

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We sat down with the duo! The girls were friendly, outgoing, and couldn't have been more down to earth. We look forward to watching them for years to come.

How many years apart are you guys?
Two and a half years.

Where did you go to school?
Were you always together in school?
Ryleigh: We went to Brookswood. Robyn went there all the way to grade twelve but I started doing online schooling in grade 11 and just did one course per year at Brookswood so I could officially graduate from the school. We both had a few tough times in high school but having music always made us feel better.

You taught yourself how to play guitar?
Robyn: Yes, well, I spent 4 years at Belmont Elementary learning Ukulele which made me want to learn how to play guitar. My parents bought me a little red guitar for Christmas and I learned on that using YouTube and the internet. I searched chord charts and learned that way.

What got you interested in singing?
Belmont Elementary was a very musical school. Mr. Thomas was our teacher and he ran ukulele classes, and band classes for the students. We did all of that, choir, Christmas concerts, Ryleigh played Lily St. Regis in the play "Annie" in grade 7. We always wanted to sing but never expected we would do it together. One day Robyn was in her room singing and playing guitar and Ryleigh started harmonizing to the melody! Our parents thought it sounded great and suggested we get together.

What are your musical influences and how have they changed over the years?
Ryleigh: If I could just sing 80's cover tunes I would. We just put 3 of them into our set which makes me very happy. I love everything about the 80's, the clothes, the big hair, everything. Our manager was, and is, a member of Stonebolt which was a band big in the 70's and into the 80's. We got to play with him on stage, it was so much fun, I could not get the smile off my face.
Robyn: I would love to sing with Miranda Lambert, Loretta Lynn or Dolly Parton one day...or all three! Ever since I watched Coal Miner's Daughter I have loved Loretta Lynn. Also big on our list of influences are Keith Urban, Dixie Chicks, we cover lots of their songs!

We heard you were in Nashville, how did that happen?
Robyn: LANGLEY got us to Nashville! We went all over Langley and put up posters promoting a big show and everybody came out to see us, pretty sure the show was sold out or close to it, at Brookswood High's Theater. We raised enough money to go to Nashville where we were there for 10 days with our manager. It was such an incredible experience. The second we got off the plane we could hear Miranda Lambert music playing at the airport. We both love her music!
Ryleigh: We had a lot of awesome song writing sessions which I had never really done before; Robyn writes most of our songs. We had some half-finished songs that we brought to the table and we finished them with other writers, three heads are better than one. We also came away from Nashville with a huge love for the place and 4 brand new songs that we've been in the studio recording. We have plans on releasing one soon which we are very excited about.

What is it like working together as sisters
Robyn: We are each other's best friends that's for sure. We fight sometimes but as soon as we get on stage there is a chemistry that makes us best friends again.
Ryleigh: We spend so much time together in the back seat of my parents car and I am always telling Robyn to stop putting her stuff on me. Plus she gets car sick so she has to sit in the middle, squishing me. Our parents help drive us around everywhere which is awesome, it helps us get us to where we need to be on gig days.

Any tour plans?
Robyn: We are in the first stage of planning a tour and we are very excited. We are hoping to go as far and wide as we can and our managers will make it happen. We have a great team! We've had a pretty busy summer so far, making a couple trips to Alberta already and plan on going back again to attend the CCMA's in September. On Aug 7th we opened up for Trooper at Penticton's Peach Festival with members of Stonebolt (David Wills and Ray Roper) joining with our band for the show! After our show Trooper asked us to join them for "Raise a Little Hell," we had such a blast there singing for over 7000+ people. There is a video clip of us with Trooper on our FB Page. "Robyn&Ryleigh"

What are your fans like?
Robyn: We have a wide range of age groups who seem to really like our music. We have little girls who come out to our shows and we have people our parent's and Grandparents age who come out to support us as well, not to say they are old or anything haha. We had a young girl come up to us in Kamloops and tell us she has been following us for 4 years. I gave her my concert pick and she was so excited. It gives me goose bumps and makes me well up with happy tears when that happens. It is so cool and inspirational!

What is your favorite spot to hang out in Langley?
Robyn: Long & McQuade...it's like a candy store to me! We even were lucky enough to pick up some awesome band members there too! I also enjoy Campbell Valley Park. I love to jog, walk and run there. It's my sanctuary. Other than that, the Brookswood Starbucks.
Ryleigh: The Ruan Thai Restaurant in Brookswood Village is amazing, great food, love this place. Recording at the studio of course and I also enjoy just being at home hanging out with the family.

We would like to thank Robyn and Ryleigh for their time and cannot wait to see where their music takes them!

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