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New Royalty may take pop crown in Z100 contest

Local band rallies community for votes
 BY JESSICA SMITH
 Staff Writer



The New Royalty perform before a crowd of more than 8,000 at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson Sept. 3.

Despite consistently winning awards and garnering praise from music bigwigs, members of the local indie pop band The New Royalty have not let the quickly budding stardom go to their heads.

For the second year in a row, the band has made it into the top five finalists of pop radio station Z100's Hometown Hero contest, a feat that band members did not take for granted.

"It was very surprising that we got in a second time," bass guitarist Kyle Davis, 18, of Millstone Township, said. "They still believe in us, they still like our music."

East Brunswick native Nick Iafelice, 17, one of the band's two guitarists, was equally taken aback by making the finals.

"I didn't think we were going to make it, because we were in it last year," he said. "Finding out this year, I was kind of shocked."

Considering the band's résumé, their second-time rise to the top in the contest does not seem surprising at all. In 2011, The New Royalty has emerged as winner of the Bamboozle Break Contest, the Vans War for Warped Tour and the Stone Pony Original Band Competition.

In addition, The New Royalty placed third among 250 bands in the Jersey Showdown, and received nominations in three categories at the annual Asbury Music Awards in November, where they were chosen to perform and present awards.

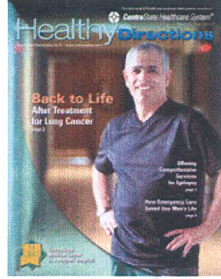
In September they played for a crowd of more than 8,000 people when they opened for Big Time Rush at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson.

Although the band members — who also include Nick's twin Bree Iafelice, lead vocalist; guitarist Trevor Smith of Monroe Township, a student at Brookdale Community College; and Milltown's Ricky Joyce, drummer and recent Rutgers University graduate — are not ones to toot their own horns about their achievements, band manager Paul Sallee is not shy about singing their praises.

"They've got their act together so much that the sound they have is professional," said Sallee, owner and teacher at Music University in Freehold.

He pointed out that the band's work ethic has helped to put them on the map. They rehearse two to three times weekly, including Friday nights, he said.

"Instead of going out, they're rehearsing," he said.



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Kyle Davis (l-r), Nick Iafelice, Bree Iafelice, Trevor Smith and Ricky Joyce, members of the New Royalty.

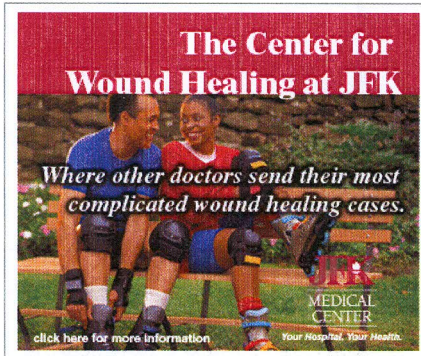
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They're also playing lots of gigs — more than 50 over the past year and a half, according to Sallee, who said that because of their professionalism and tight sound, he does not think of them as kids or compare them to other bands in their age bracket.

"I think people in the industry are looking at them exactly the same way," he said.

By the looks of things, Sallee may be right.

After entering the contest a few weeks back, The New Royalty gained enough votes to make it into the pool of 25 finalists narrowed from about 350 New York-area bands and solo artists competing.

The band was then chosen by a panel of judges that included top music industry executives to be among the top five finalists.

If they nab the top prize, the band will play live at the Z100 and Coca-ColaAllAccess Lounge at Hammerstein Ballroom as the pre-show to Z100's sold-out Jingle Ball at Madison Square Garden on Dec. 9.

"You get to go on the red carpet and all kinds of other crazy stuff," Nick said, adding, "I think it would definitely give us a lot more opportunities to play in New York. Winning that contest would be a great way to advertise the band."

To get there, Sallee and the band members are pulling out all the stops to get the word, and the vote, out.

They, along with their street team and friends, are distributing fliers at clubs, festivals, school football games and elsewhere to campaign. They are also reaching out through Facebook and by posting performance videos on YouTube.

"We need all the help we can get, and all the support is greatly appreciated," Davis said.

If karma plays a role, the band should garner a great deal of community support. They regularly perform to benefit charity organizations, including the Bronx Children's Hospital as part of Z100's Musicians On Call; the Graeme Preston Foundation; the Greater Media Soundstage event to benefit Parents of Autistic Children and Our Special Place, a learning center for children with special needs; and the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The release party in October 2010 for their CD, "When Poets Dream," was held at Allentown's Stone Bridge Middle School to benefit the music program there.

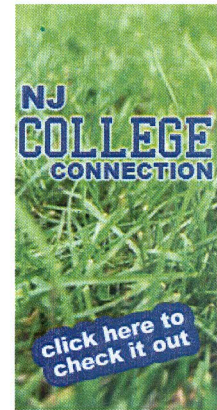
They also joined in the efforts of the national "BULLYING ... We're Kickin' It" campaign, when they played to raise awareness.

"We played there to show kids there are a lot of positive outlets they can do, like music," Nick said.

For The New Royalty, music has thus far shown to be about as positive as it can get.

"There's been a lot of exciting moments," Sallee said. "They never cease to amaze me."

To vote for The New Royalty before 11:59 p.m. Dec. 1, visit www.eventful.com/ Z100. The band's website is www.thenewroyaltymusic.com.



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