

Junior Common Room where I have arranged to meet singer/songwriter and budding musician Victor Swift, I can't help but notice the impromptu piano instrumental that's unfolding amongst Diablo's fair-trade sipping customers. To my amazement, the youthful piano player is Mr. Swift. Beyond his years in every sense, Swift has taken the university experience in his stride, balancing his schoolwork with a relentless array of gigs and

open-mic sessions. His aim is simple: "to share the music in my head with the hungry ears of the world." With a second album on its way, the first written and produced before Victor's sixteenth birthday, a catalogue of songs and videos online, and a memorable appearance on Canadian Idol, it looks like Swift is on his way...

DEMO: How did you get into music both as a fan and then as an artist?

VICTOR: I remember listening, at the age of nine, to Queen and Guns N' Roses but I also listened to a lot of classical music. As an artist, it all began 4 years ago when I bought my first instrument, the bass guitar. At the beginning, I wanted to learn every song ever written, but before long I learned that this dream would take a lifetime. Thus, I decided to take charge and write my own tunes. I gradated from bass to guitar after years of playing and loved the change; more versatility, and basically more opportunities to develop the music in my head. I have been playing guitar ever since and have picked up several other instruments along the way. I found myself writing a song a day and decided it was time to show the world. I recorded my first CD in 2007. The CD was recorded in several rooms of my house with the recording gear I had accumulated over the years. I began playing shows across Ontario promoting my CD and sharing fresh tunes with the world. The thing that kept me stuck to music once I started was the fact that I could trap a thought, emotion, or memory forever and I don't mean in just lyrics, I mean the music as well. Music today seems to have lost the personal touch which was once so important. I have another band called The Hours After. We perform one or twice a month. The sound is a lot heavier and rockier. It's Audioslave meets Radiohead I guess.

Victor Swift can be found at:
http://www.victorswift.com/
http://www.myspace.com/victorswiftmusic
YouTube Channel: victorswiftmusician

DEMO: What is your earliest memory in regards to music?

VICTOR: My earliest memory would have to be singing to Queen in the living room. My first record was Savage Garden and then my tastes must have developed pretty quickly because my second record was Aerosmith. I didn't start going to concerts until around five years ago. My first concert was Switchfoot and seeing the lead singer Jon Foreman was pretty inspiring. The crowds were really into it and that concert kicked off my passion for music. Jon had a huge impact on me continuing song writing. He has a quote that keeps me going when I'm having trouble finding my musical self, "song writing is a lot like digging for buried treasure, you hack and hack at the earth searching and searching but once you find a gold nugget nothing else matters"

DEMO: Do you think technology has made it easier for new artists, such as yourself, to have a voice and to reach wider audience has the competition and lack of originality swamped the musi findustre?

VICTOR: I feel that technology is both a step forward and a step backward. It's a step backward because nowadays record companies sift through so much material that it's become harder to have a voice and to be noticed. I believe that although websites such as MySpace are useful in reaching your fans and sharing your music, it's not the main way. To me, playing in the streets for no money or even playing here in the Junior Common Room is a more traditional way of reaching new audiences. On the other hand, MySpace has made it easier for everyone—both the fans and the artists. It puts the business perspective in the hands of the artist as you know who are coming to shows and how many listens your songs have had. As for the lack of originality, it depends on the commitment of the artist. If someone does have the talent and the right work ethic then that should come through. If they want to copy and rehash another singer or band then that's pretty sad.

DEMO: You've mentioned that you've recorded one around already and you're now in the process of recording your second album at the end of December?

VICTOR: Yeah, spot on! I bought a condenser microphone and used that with my laptop in order to record the songs. Outside of school, I'm learning sound engineering to try and understand how to record more effectively so I can produce a better recording. It's interesting trying to understand the mathematics and presets behind the recording process.

DEMO: What was your experience on the seventh Canadian Idol like?

VICTOR: I got to meet other kids who have a passion for music, there were a handful of people that were there for the fame but overall there were so many talented performers. The organizers of Canadian Idol rented out a hotel in Downtown Toronto and within one floor there were around twenty pianos. It allowed everyone to jam together and to appreciate, and contribute, to the music that was being created. It was a memorable experience

got to jam with the Top 12 which was sweet. Canadian all taught me a lot and inspired me to expand my musical soloration.

Late vou got many upcoming shows?

This fall alone I've played at The Opera House, El Mocambo, Holy Joe's, Hart House, and Kelly's Corner.

Before starting at Uof T, I used to play once or twice a month but school has given me an opportunity to perform—last month alone I have performed more than seven or eight shows in between schoolwork and recording my second album. At some of my shows I've been selling shirts which some of my fans created for me, which was awesome.

DENIED. What do you think of Toronto's music scene a large. It seems like there's a plethora of venues and bands it's almost too much!

VICTOR: To be honest, Toronto's music scene is saturated. It's overly saturated. There are so many random bands, many of which my friends are in, but there are a lack of solid venues to play in.

DELIO: Now that we are at the end of the first term of your first year at Uof T, what are your thoughts on value eastly life?

VICTOR: I'm enjoying school. It's much more flexible than high school. Although because I commute from home, my days are mostly from nine in the morning until I get home at nine in the evening which can suck. My classes are difficult, but they have to be. The professors are amazing, so intelligent and really down to earth people.

DEMIC: What are you listening to at the moment

VICTOR: Muse, Rise Against, Coldplay, LCD Soundsystem. There's a number of Australian bands I'm into at the moment, such as, The Cat Empire and Silver Chair. I don't cling to a single artist though, musical exploration is important so you know what is out there and what can be done.



Victor Switt