



R5 knows how to connect with its target audience

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Posted: Thursday, May 29, 2014 12:15 am

By ED CONDRAN Correspondent

The screams from prepubescent females directed at R5 are probably still bouncing around Pine Belt Arena.

The young pop-rock band played before a capacity crowd last November at the Toms River venue and capped a five-hour show full of kid rock in which young girls swooned, squealed and shouted.

Expect more of the same when R5 performs Friday at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts.



"My earliest memory is dancing around with my father to Bruce (Springsteen)," recalls Riker Lynch (left).

"We love our fans," says vocalist-bassist Riker Lynch. "I can't say enough about them. They support us so we can do what we dream of doing."

It was evident what thrilled the Lynch kids the most while growing up in Colorado. It was all about music for Stormie and Mark Lynch's children as they came of age during the 1990s.

"We were all so passionate about entertainment, particularly singing and dancing," Lynch says. "It's no wonder we've gone in this direction."

The group, which features Lynch's siblings, vocalist-guitarists Rocky Lynch and Ross Lynch, keyboardist Rydel Lynch and drummer Ellington Ratliff, were born to belt out pop tunes.

Rydel Lynch was named after the high school in "Grease," the group's favorite film.

"We watched that movie over and over again when we were kids," Lynch says. "My parents love it so much, they named our sister after Rydel High. When we were kids, like 6, 7 and 8, we would put on shows and do songs from 'Grease,' like 'Greased Lightning.' But we all also loved Michael Jackson as kids. We would do our Michael Jackson dances."

But R5 isn't just about pure pop. The Lynch brood adds an element of rock to its well-produced material.

"I think that comes from Bruce Springsteen," Lynch says. "My earliest memory is dancing around with my father to Bruce. His music has had a big impact on each of us."

The Lynch family exudes warmth and togetherness while onstage. During their show in Toms River, the band constantly smiled and laughed as they delivered their set.

"It really isn't something that you can fake," Lynch says. "You see certain bands and there is that iciness. We don't have that. We've been close since day one. I watched a video recently of when my parents brought Rocky home from the hospital. They said, 'Meet your new best friend.'

"Rocky and I are so close that I named him. I told my parents that we should name the baby Rocky after the (then) new baseball team, the Colorado Rockies, and they agreed to it — and they noticed we had the 'R' thing going on."

Rocky and Riker's rock music bond was cemented six years ago when their father took them to see O.A.R.

"We've been to the Backstreet Boys before, but this was way cooler," Lynch says. "After catching that show, I knew I wanted to be in a rock band. And then when I saw Fall Out Boy and Pete Wentz playing bass, I knew that was my instrument and so I went with the bass."

There are traces of the rock element on "Louder," the band's first full-length project. It's primarily a dance-pop record.

"I'm really proud of this album," Lynch says. "We've done some really good things, but I want to raise the bar for our next album."

That will drop later in the year.

Don't be surprised if you catch Lynch, who has appeared on "Glee," doing some television work before the work is released.

"I love doing TV," Lynch says. "I really loved doing 'Glee.' I'm open to acting, but music — and, in particular, this band — means more than anything to me."

R5 appears Friday at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, 52nd Street and Parkside Avenue, Philadelphia. Show time: 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$32.50 and \$45. Information: 215-893-1999.