



RISE

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HOLLYWOOD RECORDS

"THE GOAL IS TO BE THE BIGGEST BAND IN THE WORLD. THAT'S THE DREAM."

Following the 2017 release of their debut EP, *Welcome to the Club*, the totally talented trio— Blake Richardson, Reece Bibby and George Smith—is taking the music world by storm with their British boy-next-door charm and paving the road to ultra success with their one-of-a-kind sound in tow. **By Ali Booth**

Do you guys identify as a boy band?

BLAKE: We are kind of a hybrid. We are obviously boys, and we're in a band, so we're a boy band. And we all sing, but we then play instruments, so it's kind of nontraditional. **REECE:** If you can't put a label on us then it's a good thing because it means we're unique!

Did the three of you click right away or was it more of a gradual friendship?

REECE: We were never told, "You have to be in this band. This has to work." We met up and we just watched some films, played some music, and it was all really natural. We came away from that weekend with maybe not the best song ever, but we definitely knew that there was something there and that we had a future together.

You're pretty much the kings of covers, and your first-ever cover was of The Vamps' "Wake Up." What's your relationship with them like now?

GEORGE: The first time we ever performed as a band together was with The Vamps to 16,000 people in Birmingham. And we were looking at each other onstage like, "What is happening?"

We're very lucky to have those boys pushing us along. And now we're here!

BLAKE: And now our nerves before we go on are quite chill, because from then on we've been like, "OK, we did that as our first show. I think we can do this."

The Vamps told us earlier this year that they're 100% still going to be together in 20 years. Do you guys feel the same way?

BLAKE: Definitely! Even if we were to release an album, two albums, three albums, we're always gonna want to keep writing.

GEORGE: We're literally like best friends. We spend all our time with each other—even if people stop liking us, we'll probably just start playing weddings. If you've got any weddings coming up, let us know!

Have you had any super-memorable fan experiences so far?

REECE: It's been a dream for us to play to our own fans and

have people sing our songs back at us, so all of those moments are really special.

BLAKE: There was this fan who came to our show in San Francisco. She took a flight all the way from Mexico, which was like a nine-hour flight. She couldn't speak any English. Her brother had to translate for her, but she was so happy to be there. We couldn't believe she came all that way just to see us—it's amazing.

It sounds like your fans are really supportive! How do you deal with the not-so-positive feedback and online comments that you inevitably receive?

REECE: You've just gotta think anyone has the power to use social media and write whatever they want, and so you are gonna get the comment that's nasty. There's nothing you can do to avoid it. If it's a constructive criticism, we'll take it onboard. But some people just don't like us, and that's OK!

If you could collaborate with one artist, who would it be?

GEORGE: Personally, I am a massive fan of Ed Sheeran, and I have been for ages. I'd love if I got to write with him and we could do a collaboration.

BLAKE: I love Bruno Mars. It'd be cool to do something onstage with him.

Are there any bands that you really look up to?

GEORGE: I think the Beatles is the ultimate band we look up to. I can't ever get bored of listening to their music.

Do you have a preshow ritual that you do before going onstage?

BLAKE: We do! We get in a huddle, and then we sing a chant for the city. We've got a futbol kind of chant. We'd go, "New York, New York," or wherever we are. Then, in the middle, we do little tingles with our fingers. And then we do a three-way high five. It's evolved a lot since our first show, but I think this is the final ritual.

And what's next for you three?

REECE: The next goal for us as a band is a tour of our own, to play our own shows. We had a little bit of a taste of it in New York, during the little secret gig, which has only just made us want to do it more. We feel like the club is ready. And we're ready to go out there and play some new songs that nobody's heard.

New Hope Club