

Rocking Aurora music teachers could be 'The Next Big Thing'

By Brock Weir

By day, they teach local kids at Aurora's Piano Studio; by night, however, they turn to rock and (with your help) could be 'The Next Big Thing'.

James Bunker, Zack Wojtala, Chris O'Heir, and Nick Hunt are 'The Fiscals', who were recently named Top 20 finalists in the 'The Next Big Thing', a contest hosted by radio station 102.1 'the edge' showcasing up and coming bands.

Making the Top 20 was a surprise for the band, who weren't even aware their manager had entered them in the competition in the first place, but they couldn't be happier with the result.

'I think we have a similar sound to what 'the edge' is looking for,' says Wojtala. 'We're a very rock-based band with pop hooks and I think that is something which resonates with 'the edge.'

With their early roots in a hip hop duo formed by Wojtala and Bunker, they shifted gears when joined by O'Heir and Hunt. Wojtala and Hunt both teach at The Piano Studio and share a love of inspiring creativity in their students.

'Chris and I have both tried to influence our students to get creative and by playing in the band ourselves, I think we put ourselves there as good role models for getting out there, making up a band and jamming with our friends,' he says. 'That is something that has always been important to us.'

After studying jazz at York University, Wojtala says he developed a love of incorporating different chords and rhythms into his work. Applying the principles of jazz to rock is something he has always enjoyed and is how he defines his own style of music 'upbeat and uplifting.'

'We like to keep it very rhythmic and keep people's heads bobbing and making sure they are having a good time, but we also have underlying lyrics that might have some deep meaning,' he says. 'James puts a lot of heart into his lyrics and some of my lyrics like to tell stories.'

'I grew up listening to a lot of Queen, James listened to a lot of Depeche Mode and New Order, and Chris has always been into the punk scene. We all agree on bands like Blink 182. Our influences are all coming from different areas.'

Although making it into the Top 20 was something of a surprise, they hope the unexpected accolade will help them perform with bands they love, but, in the end, they just want to connect with an audience.

'It is all about connections ' even if we become good friends in just a fan to band relationship,' he says.

To listen to The Fiscals, visit www.the-fiscals.com. To cast your vote for The Next Big Thing, head over to www.edge.ca/contest/3748.