

Prodigies will play at 'Turn on the Lights'

by Amanda Franko-Tobin

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Beware Bieber! There is a new tween heartthrob in town, if only for a night. Matthew Davidson of Shreveport is already an accomplished musician at 14 years old.

This freshman in high school received his first toy guitar at age 3. He hasn't stopped strumming since. Davidson began weekly lessons on the acoustic guitar in second grade, and won his first electric model in the James Burton Foundation's Guitar Showdown before the end of elementary school.

Since then he has played in venues across Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. A guitarist, vocalist and songwriter, Davidson formed the eponymous Matthew Davidson Band with fellow high school students Kyle McClanahan, Greg Walton and Zack Ebey.

A veteran performer at the Jazz/R&B Festival, Davidson is pumped to return to Natchitoches for "Turn on the Holidays" this Saturday. "I liked it! There was a nice stage, a fun crowd and good weather. I'm looking forward to coming back."

He will perform from 12:30-2 p.m.

Music is Davidson's ultimate life goal. "To do music successfully would be a blessing," he reports. Rock and roll from his dad's CD collection exerts the most influence over Davidson's musical taste.

He describes his style as a melding of rock, blues and Beatles-esque pop. Eric Clapton, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Maroon 5 and John Mayer are also named as inspirations.

Beyond playing music, Davidson enjoys the experience and attention that comes with professional touring.

"I like getting up in front of people, interacting with the crowd, seeing them having a good time," he explains.

The pint-sized performer balances his burgeoning music career with average, 14-year-old pastimes—namely school.

"It's tedious sometimes. You have to make priorities and learn to juggle. Homework tonight, band practice tomorrow," the musician says, sounding incredibly responsible for his age.

Davidson's favorite venue thus far is Jazz Fest in New Orleans. "I just soaked it in. We were playing at the same time as the Eagles, but there was still a decent crowd," he

remembers fondly.

His advice to aspiring songsters? "Keep practicing, work hard and it's okay to be unsure. Keep on keeping on, and follow your heart."

Humbly admitting that he hasn't been in the music business for very long, Davidson clearly has a passion for playing that exceeds professional gain.

He released his first EP over the summer. "Step-Up" has four tracks and was produced by bass legend Joe Osborn, who discovered the Carpenters and is an inductee to the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame.

Osborn enjoys collaborating with Davidson. "Matthew's musicianship is far beyond his years," he says. "When I play with Matthew, it's like playing with a seasoned professional. And Matthew is always a gentleman."

"Step-Up" is available for download at iTunes and Amazon and sold at Disc Daddy in Shreveport. For more information, visit www.matthewdavidson.net.

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