



A Focus on the Family magazine designed to lead teen girls

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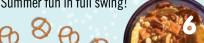
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Brio talks with this up-and-coming artist about "American Idol," touring with TobyMac and future plans

INTERVIEW BY ROBIN MERRILL

t was 2013, and Holly Marie Miller—at the ripe old age of 16—made it to Hollywood week as a contestant on "American Idol," season 12! Little did she know that TobyMac, Christian music's award-winning artist and producer, was following her progress. His invitation to tour with him would ultimately launch her career.

Holly Marie now performs as Hollyn and released her debut album, One-Way Conversations, earlier this year. Brio caught up with this rising young star to discuss faith, family and music. >>>

Hollyn: "American Idol" was a lot of fun. I went through that experience, and I realized more clearly what I really wanted to do. While on the show, I was always asked what kind of artist I wanted to be. I wasn't sure because I grew up singing different styles of music. But I'm glad that I went through

that experience because it taught me qualities I needed to have as an artist, like the ability to stay up late. Being a believer on the show, I enjoyed meeting people who have the same belief system as me.

Were the people you worked with on the show supportive of your faith, or did you feel any sort of resistance?

Hollyn: I was very open about my faith, and there were a lot of people on the show who love Jesus and are believers, so there wasn't a lot of resistance [toward my faith].

How were you involved in music at church when you were younger?

Hollyn: I grew up in a Christian family. My dad pastored a small country church for eight years, so I volunteered for plays and anything else that was happening in the church. I sang and all that stuff. It was a huge part of my life, and it made me into who I am today. I'm grateful for that upbringing and the influence it had on my life. We didn't have a choir, but our youth group got up and sang songs. Then when my dad was a pastor, my brother, my mom and I led worship. I was singing in a church, but I didn't consider myself an artist or anything.

"I get to walk in a freedom that is mine because I am a daughter of God."

So when did you know that you wanted to be an artist?

Hollyn: I don't think there was a defining moment when I knew. My whole life so far has been music, and I've always gravitated toward that. I just naturally knew that I wanted it to be a part of my life in some way, so when I was presented with the opportunity to sign with Gotee Records, to work with them and be a part of that team, I was like, "Yes, of course." I definitely went for it, and here we are today.

Rrie Is it true that you had told your parents you would one day be singing with TobyMac?

Hollyn: It's not exactly that I told them I would be singing with Toby. I went to a concert he was headlining and [I] just started thinking about all the stuff that I went through in Hollywood. After the whole "American Idol" experience, I saw a different side of things that I didn't really know existed, the

behind-the-scenes stuff, what it really takes to get a show together. So I was looking at Toby as an artist and looking at his set, and was like, Man, it would just be so cool to get up on stage and sing about whatever you wanted to sing about and be your own artist. When I went home, I told my parents, "Wouldn't it be cool if I

worked with TobyMac one day or something?" And then he called my dad two weeks later. It was just a weird thing. He got my dad's number from a mutual friend. He had been keeping up with my stuff on YouTube. It's a crazy, crazy story.

It sounds like a God thing.

Hollyn: Yes, that was definitely a God thing.

"Alone": "I can be a little punk sometimes." Do you remember how that line came about?

Hollyn: It was a Toby line. My producer, Brian, Toby and I were in the studio, and we were trying to come up with a line that went with "You know me so well." I remember Toby was sitting on the couch, and he was like, "This might be crazy, but what if we said like 'I can be a little punk sometimes'?"





And I was like. "You know? It's kind of true. We should probably put that in the song." We didn't know how people would take it. People love it.

What is your favorite Bible verse?

Hollyn: My favorite Bible verse right now is Isaiah 30:21. It says whether you turn to the right or to the left, you'll hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

What is your favorite part of your music career right now?

Hollyn: Probably knowing that everything is under control even if it feels out of control. I can rest in knowing that whatever plan God orchestrates for my life or whatever I choose to do in the future, it's all part of a bigger plan that I can't see. I often forget that, but when something happens that brings me back to remembering that truth, I can rest easy and just enjoy myself when I am out on the road and hanging out with my friends and the Capital Kings guys. They are like my brothers. I just want to live a life that's full of joy. It's fun, because I get to walk in a freedom that is mine because I am a daughter of God, so why not enjoy things? It's just a great season of life for me. I am a single, 20-year-old girl

who's getting to travel with her best friends. I am blessed to do what I love and make a career out of it as well.

What are the challenges of being a Christian in the music business?

Hollyn: No matter where my music takes me, I want to speak and sing from my heart. Sometimes it's a struggle to find that boundary of "What is the main goal with my music?" Is it something that is going to glorify God and honor my character and who I know I am in Him? If it is, then that's what I do.

I think it's hard to find the balance because there are different voices coming at you all the time. It doesn't matter if you are in music or you work at a library or at Walmart; we're all faced with competing voices in our heads. But I think that at the end of the day, just knowing what the main goal is, what the purpose is behind me doing music is [what matters].

What advice would you give Brio girls who love to make music?

Hollyn: Stay passionate about it, keep making music and keep writing songs because you can only get better. When I was 15 or 16, during study hall I would go to the choir room when no one was in there. I would just sit at the piano and write songs. I still have them on my phone. I would write a song or two every day. I would play the piano and sing whatever was on my heart, or sing gibberish or whatever. I remember how in love I was with just doing that because I made that time of day something that was important to me. If you find something you are passionate about, God put that desire in your heart for a reason.

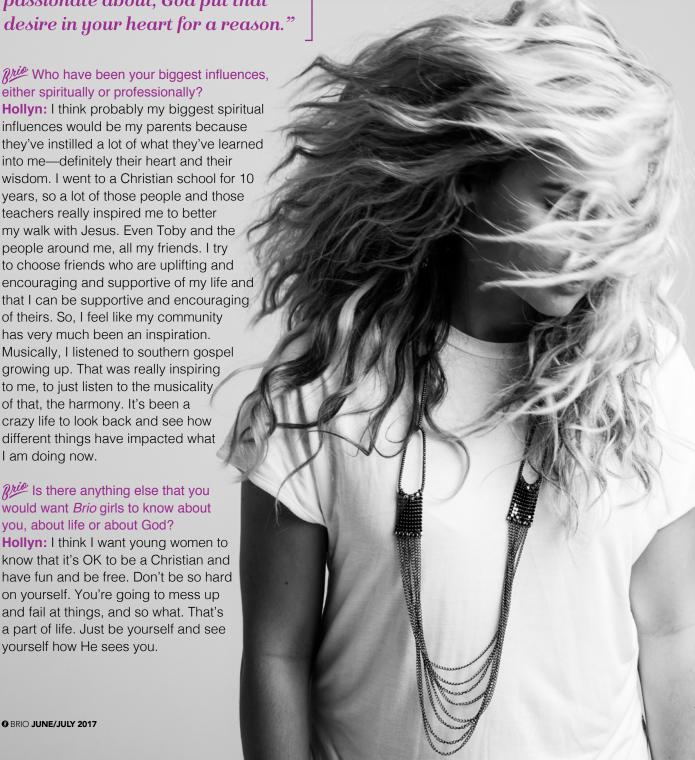
"If you find something you are passionate about, God put that desire in your heart for a reason."

As for boys or self-image or anything like that, I say just enjoy your single season. If I had a boyfriend right now, my life would be even more hectic. I don't know what I would do with that. God knows what He is doing. I think it's a good thing to sit back and let Him do what He does. Just take one day at a time and do what you love—and if you don't know what you love, you'll figure it out. Just live life, and God has the best for you. He is for you; He is behind you and in front of you and beside you. He's going to make the way clear to you. ?

either spiritually or professionally? Hollyn: I think probably my biggest spiritual influences would be my parents because they've instilled a lot of what they've learned into me—definitely their heart and their wisdom. I went to a Christian school for 10 years, so a lot of those people and those teachers really inspired me to better my walk with Jesus. Even Toby and the people around me, all my friends. I try to choose friends who are uplifting and encouraging and supportive of my life and that I can be supportive and encouraging of theirs. So, I feel like my community has very much been an inspiration. Musically, I listened to southern gospel growing up. That was really inspiring to me, to just listen to the musicality of that, the harmony. It's been a crazy life to look back and see how different things have impacted what I am doing now.

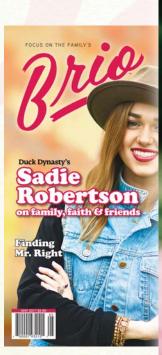
Prio Is there anything else that you would want Brio girls to know about you, about life or about God? Hollyn: I think I want young women to know that it's OK to be a Christian and have fun and be free. Don't be so hard on yourself. You're going to mess up

a part of life. Just be yourself and see yourself how He sees you.



faith, fashion & fun!

from a biblically based perspective







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