

Band on the Run

HalfBrother Sid

By Steve Cook

If you're the type that likes to say, "I remember 'em when..." then you'd better hurry up and get to know **HALFBROTHER SID**. Who is HalfBrother Sid, you ask? Well, you won't be asking that much longer, that is if the four members of this local rock band on the rise have their way.

Already, these guys are gaining fans up and down the East Coast. They're also gaining a reputation for putting on a fun show. But, chances are before this winter gives way to spring, a lot more of you will be on a first-name basis with HalfBrother Sid.

We sat down with the four guys in the band recently, along with Fletcher Rick of Kim Entertainment, a Richmond-based booking and promotions firm. It's Rick's enthusiasm and his willingness to put his money where his enthusiasm is, that may prove to be the catalyst that will help make this group, which has been together for about eight years, an "overnight success."

CL: First of all...the name, HalfBrother Sid...where'd that come from?

SCOTT: It's a reference to Tom Sawyer. He had a half-brother named Sid. My wife's a schoolteacher. She suggested it.

CL: How did the four of you get together?

BRIAN: Scott and I have known each other for over twenty year, since the sixth grade. (Both graduated from Monacan High School in Chesterfield County)

Scott: Michael has been with us for over eight years and Tony just recently joined the band.

CL: So, the three of you (Scott, Brian, and Michael) have been playing together for about eight years?

SCOTT: Yeah, we've played the Canal Club, Alley Katz, clubs in New York, D.C. North Carolina, South Carolina, and several other events throughout the Mid-Eastern region.

CL: I understand from Fletcher (Rick) that you're about to go big time. What's happened to make a difference?

FLETCHER: I heard the group and said, 'Holy Cow! These guys are exceptional. I knew they had what it takes, and I want to make sure they go to the next level.

CL: And what does it take to get them to the next level?

FLETCHER: (laughing) Money.

Scott: Ninety-nine percent of the bands out there never get this sort of opportunity. One of the hardest parts (of this business) is having the time to do the marketing and promotions. That's a full-time job. It can take its toll on the day-to-day, and it takes away the time you need to write.

BRIAN: It means a lot to have Fletcher's support. Sometimes, when you've been doing this for years, you begin to question yourself...you ask yourself, 'Do we suck?' It's good to know someone (like Fletcher) believes in us.

FLETCHER: If people just knew this group...the rock 'n roll is great, but getting to know the meaning of their songs, hearing the background, listening to the words...it's awesome.

CL: Tell me about the processes that you go through in writing your music.

MICHAEL: It's a collaboration. We write our songs together, although Scott comes up with about eighty percent of it.

SCOTT: I'll come up with a riff. Then we'll practice...work it out without the vocals, then I'll take it home and write the lyrics.

CL: And, the lyrics are based on personal experiences.

SCOTT: Much of it is. "Letters" is very close to me. It means more than most anything else I've written. It's about my dad. Also, "The Other Side" is about my mother. She passed away from cancer in '95.

The song is about her last breath. We try to put a lot more meaning into our music than just doing the typical rock anthem. I think most everyone who listens to our music can find an event in their lives to relate it to.

TONY: But we definitely do a lot of fun stuff, too.

CL: Besides Fletcher's support, what else has made a difference with the group?

BRIAN: Things started changing for us when Tony joined the band.

SCOTT: When Tony came on board, we saw the potential. We realized that we have what it takes.

MICHAEL: Tony completes the group.

CL: (to Tony) Tell me how you got hooked up with these guys.

TONY: My wife is a friend of Brian's sister. We've known each other for years, but none of us ever thought about me being part of the band.

BRIAN: We were all at Alley Katz one night and were talking about the need to replace our vocalist. Tony's wife says, 'Why don't you ask Tony.' I knew he could sing. In fact, he'd sung at my wedding.

MICHAEL: I'd never heard Tony sing before. Through the years we've had singers come and go. But, he has given us new inspiration...it feels fresh again.

CL: So, what's next for HalfBrother Sid?

FLETCHER: They'll be recording a new CD within the next few weeks. Then we'll start a major promotional effort, contacting the local media. During the month of January, we'll be getting in front of everybody.

CL: Where do you guys hope this leads?

SCOTT: Getting a contract with a major label...that's our intention.

MICHAEL: I don't think you can put a lid on the potential.

CL: And, if you hit the big time, are you ready for the changes that will mean in your lives?

FLETCHER: They're all ready to go.

TONY: My wife's really into it. That's my motivation. All of our families are very supportive. And, with their support, I think anything's possible.

SCOTT: If we get the opportunity to tour, there'll be some loose ends we'll need to take care of, but with the right scenario, we're ready.

CL: Do you anticipate any problems being on the road together over a long period of time?



Pictured (l-r) SCOTT, BRIAN, MIKE, TONY (seated)

SCOTT: There are no egos here. We're all friends.

Tony: We did a show in New York, and our hotel room was about the size of a jail cell. If we could handle that...

MICHAEL: Even when we're not performing or practicing, we're hanging out with each other. We have similar interests.

CL: So, tell me a little bit about your upcoming CD.

FLETCHER: The problem is trying to figure out which cut to promote first. It's hard to figure out why there won't be thirteen singles here. They're all good. It's going to be a great, great CD.

SCOTT: I think that anyone who likes rock will find something to like, both in the CD as well as in our live performance.

TONY: We put on a great, unscripted live show. People come up to us and tell us, 'You guys have a great time on stage.'

SCOTT: It's very good energy. The crowds can tell we love each other.

TONY: I sometimes feel like they (the other three) are doing a show for me. I enjoy turning around and watching these guys.

After spending an hour or so chatting with "these guys," I'm looking forward to watching (and listening to) them myself. To find out where you can catch HalfBrother Sid locally (before it's too late), [go to www.halfbrothersid.com](http://go.to/www.halfbrothersid.com) or www.keofva.com.

HALFBROTHER SID, UPCLOSE AND PERSONAL

SCOTT HARRITAN Hometown: Midlothian
Family: Married, 2 children, ages 14 and 2
In the band: Guitar/Back-up Vocals

BRIAN KLUENDER Hometown: Midlothian
Family: Married, no kids, but "two fat cats"
In the band: Drums

TONY JACKSON Hometown: Virginia Beach
Family: Married, 2 children, ages 2 and 1
In the band: Vocals

MICHAEL SCHAUM Hometown: Virginia Beach
Family: Single dad of a four year-old daughter
In the band: Bass

Robert Thomas Photography