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Feature Story  
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### **From dreams to reality: Dogpark amazes the internet with their musical talent**

University of Richmond's Tyler Haynes Common is a central hub for students, but to Dogpark, it signifies the band's humble beginning and its promising future.

"Looking back, that's a really cool full circle moment for Dogpark," said Billy Apostolou, the band's guitarist, when reflecting on their first and last gigs at UR.

On April 21, Dogpark opened for Jay Sean, a U.K. pop artist, at UR's annual Last Day of Class Concert at the THC Bridge.

Just two and a half years earlier, in the fall of 2021, Dogpark played its first gig under the same bridge.

"That was such a weird gig," said Eamon Moore, Dogpark's vocalist, laughing about their first show as a band. "We had bad amps, bad drums and only about 30 people were there, standing 50 feet away from us in a line."

After two years of solidifying their collective sound and gathering better equipment, Dogpark has grown into a popular band on campus and beyond.

Dogpark consists of five UR students: Chris Conte, Declan Harris, Billy Apostolou, Eamon Moore and Will Harford. They play alternative rock song covers and have some original songs in the works.

Harris, Dogpark's bassist, said that has always been a big rock and roll fan. As a child, he went in search of Christmas presents under his parents' bed and stumbled upon his dad's old guitar.

“To put it bluntly, it was the coolest thing ever,” Harris said, enamored by the pink shag on the inside of the case.

That summer he met an old hippie in his hometown of Manhattan, New York, who taught him guitar lessons all summer. During his freshman year of college, Harris picked up the bass and has loved it ever since.

Conte started playing drums at a young age. When a family friend needed a bassist for a gig, he quickly learned to play the instrument. He is Dogpark’s current drummer and former bassist.

Apostolou began playing guitar when his dad’s co-worker started giving him lessons in second grade. This continued until his senior year of high school; in third grade, he picked up classical bass and later jazz bass.

Growing up, Moore had a profound love for singing and playing the piano in his free time. As a shy child, he would rush to the classical piano in his house and sing whenever his parents weren’t home. When Moore left his hometown of Avon, Connecticut, to attend UR, he joined an acapella group, in which he met Harford.

Harford said he always dreamed of starting a band. Once he came to college, this dream finally came true. He met Apostolou through their fraternity and Conte through the music department. Harris joined Dogpark in 2022 and took over as the bassist; Conte moved to drums.

The band’s original name was Egdol, the backward spelling of “lodge,” the name for the fraternity and sorority houses at UR. After some confusion, the band decided on a name change and Moore came up with “Dogpark,” a moniker that stuck.

Dogpark has received much attention on TikTok, garnering 130,000 followers in only four months. The band members said they never expected this internet fame until their second video, a cover of “Kilby Girl” by The Backseat Lovers, received over 1 million views on the social media platform.

“I was convinced we had something, and the dream was alive,” Conte said, reflecting on their first viral TikTok. “This confirmed to me that what we were doing was repeatable and people were interested in us.”

Moore has been posting on his personal TikTok account since 2020 and has accumulated 1.9 million likes on his page. Since his account had seen success, he saw the opportunity for Dogpark to flourish on the app and used his progress as a blueprint.

According to [Music Business Worldwide](#), 75% of U.S. TikTok users say they discover new artists and bands on the app. Bands and artists can amass large followings on TikTok to launch their careers into stardom.

“Their energy is contagious, and you can’t help but dance when you hear Dogpark play,” said Beatrice Campagna, a longtime follower of the band.

The comments on Dogpark’s TikTok consist of loving words and suggestions for new covers. Fans have compared them to other popular bands and artists such as Maroon 5, Sublime, and Jeff Buckley.

Along with fan attention, Dogpark has booked multiple gigs through their TikTok and gained attention from music labels.

According to [Planet Radio](#), some of the biggest music artists and bands got discovered on social media. Since TikTok is currently the most popular social media platform, it is imperative that musicians, bands, and songwriters use the app to its potential.

TikTok has given Dogpark opportunities to play at fraternity and sorority functions at the University of Virginia, Elon University, and Hampden-Sydney College, as well as locally at the University of Richmond and in the Richmond area.

The energy, enthusiasm, passion, and friendship between the band's members are palpable when speaking to them, watching them live, and even through the camera in their videos.

"It's truly the best feeling to be completely surrounded by the crowd," Conte said.

Audience members often swarm Dogpark during their live shows, just wanting to be closer to the music and the talented musicians.

The recording studio in UR's music building serves as the background for almost all of Dogpark's TikTok videos and is where the band practices sets for upcoming gigs, writes original songs and films their viral videos.

"Conte and I say, 'Does anyone want to film a TikTok?' Then everyone says no and then we end up filming a TikTok," said Apostolou, laughing about the creative process behind their videos.

Although Harford and Moore currently do most of the songwriting for the group, it is a collaborative effort. One person comes into the studio with an idea or a riff and each member puts his own twist on it to form a unified, unique sound.

When they're not in the studio, Dogpark often heads to dinner before gigs at The Continental, a local sandwich and burger restaurant. They often engage in intense matches of the board game, Catan, and indulge in "Gyro Wednesday" during which Apostolou cooks up the entrée for the band members.

After the band walks across the stage and receives their diplomas in May, they plan to move across the country to Los Angeles, California, to pursue their dream of landing a recording contract. Their primary focus is writing original songs and developing their sound. Next, they plan to produce an album and set up music streaming accounts for the band on Spotify and Apple Music.

"You'll see us on a billboard one day," Harris said.

For the time being, their individual music is available on Spotify. Harford has released five original songs through the name "[harf.](#)" Conte has four songs out with the name "[chris!](#)" and Moore has seven original songs under the name "[eamon mo.](#)"

Until Dogpark produces an album of original songs, their covers of popular songs such as "Jackie and Wilson" by Hozier and "505" by Arctic Monkeys are available on [YouTube](#) and [TikTok](#).

The members of Dogpark have no doubt that they too will make it big someday – just like the artists they cover.