



AJR — three brothers born and raised in New York City — has achieved a startlingly quick level of success with “I’m Ready,” a buoyant electro-pop single that’s taking off. The numbers: almost 8 million YouTube views for “I’m Ready,” over 500,000 singles sold, features in *Billboard* and the *New York Post*, and heavy airplay on pop radio’s coveted SiriusXM “Hits 1” while climbing the Top 40 chart. Their tour dates last fall included shows with The Wanted, Demi Lovato, and Hoodie Allen.

More amazing? They’ve done this all on their own.

No pop svengali overseeing their work. No studio musicians filling in the blanks. No Max Martin co-write. Simply a DIY pop group that writes, records, and produces everything themselves from the living room of their Chelsea apartment.

So let’s meet the intriguing Met brothers — Adam (bass/vocals), a 24-year old Columbia University graduate. Ryan (guitar/piano/vocals), a bespectacled 20-year old Columbia student who serves as the band’s main songwriter (in addition to AJR’s music, he has also co-written Andy Grammer’s hit single “Back Home”). And Jack (vocals/guitar), the 17-year old force-of-nature who splits time between lead vocals and attending high school in NYC.

From an early age, music was the brothers’ passion. “After realizing that the three of us could sing, we immediately started harmonizing, taking cues from classic bands like Simon Garfunkel and The Beach Boys,” Adam remembers. Eight years ago, AJR got their musical start busking in Central Park and Washington Square, singing Jackson 5 covers, and, later, their own material.

They took those busking earnings to buy musical instruments, equipment, and Pro Tools. Over time, they realized that they could get the sound they needed just recording in the living room with their \$99 microphone, which is where they still record today.

As they were practicing, some interesting sounds started to appear. “We were combining older music, from the ‘50s and ‘60s, with more modern music,” explains Ryan, who dubs their sound as both “electric indie-pop with folksy influences.” “When we play in our apartment, you can hear it in the entire hallway,” says Jack. “It’s actually surprising that we haven’t gotten complaints.”

Their single “I’m Ready” was something Ryan actually wrote while stuck in his Columbia dorm room during Hurricane Sandy. “Instantly, I thought it was a hit,” his brother Jack would later recall.

The band’s big break came last year. Sitting in a psychology class at Columbia with Adam, Ryan tweeted out a link of an early version of their video for “I’m Ready” to dozens of famous recording artists.

Apparently, some of those celebrity tweeters heard a hit as well, including popular singer-songwriter Sia, who tweeted back and, eventually, formed a bond with the brothers, spreading the word to her own network about their music.

From those first few mentions, “I’m Ready” took on a life of its own. The “Spongebob Squarepants”-sampling pop track, which *Billboard* favorably compared to The Beach Boys and Simon & Garfunkel (for the harmonies) and Fun. and Imagine Dragons (for the electro-pop influences), started getting play on Sirius XM’s “20 On 20.”

The amazing music video for “I’m Ready” soon followed and the views continue to jump at an incredible rate. At heart, the video is performance based but mixed with a cornucopia of social media tropes and, concurrently, acting as a (*very* Meta) commentary on the band’s own rise to fame. It was, as one fan described, “something that could only be made right now.”

What came next? The band was named iHeartRadio’s Artist of the Month for Top 40 in January, and a MySpace “One to Watch” in February. Having already formed their own label, AJR Productions, the band finalized a partnership with Warner Bros. Records in March. “I’m Ready” officially impacted pop radio in April, and later this summer, after going on tour with Lindsey Stirling, AJR will release their debut album, all written, produced and mixed by the 3 brothers in their living room. As one article described the early results: “Pop melodies with vintage barber shop vocals [and] edgier electronic samples and ‘spokestep’ [aka dubstep breakdowns derived from vocals].”

Ask AJR about their rise to fame—and their apparent lack of band turmoil— and the band points to the one thing that’s always united them.

“The fact that we’re brothers is essential to our process.” says Ryan. “Because we are so close, there is no ego battle. We are all on the same page as to the vision for our band, and the ultimate goal is to create the best possible music.”