

# HALEY PHARO

I was waiting for “that moment,” says Haley Pharo about beginning work on her debut album, produced by Grammy winner Andrew Dawson (Kanye West, John Legend, Beyoncé). Considering that Pharo, who is now 23, has been onstage since she was eight, writing since she was 11 and recording since she was 13, it’s been quite a wait.

The moment came when she was in the studio with King Logan (of Timbaland’s production crew) working on the track “Con Artist.” Pharo recalls thinking: “This really feels like me; I want my record to have this kind of feel.” The song is indeed characteristic of the soulful, rhythmic pop presented on Pharo’s forthcoming disc, which finds the artist unabashedly vulnerable – but not without a certain sass. “In that song, I was saying what I wanted to say the way I wanted to say it,” she reveals, “which I couldn’t have done when I was a teenager.”

Nonetheless, Haley Pharo has been pursuing her muse with precocious focus for some time. At seven, she saw a fellow camper sing “My Favorite Things” at a talent show, then reasoned, “If she can do that here, I can do it *everywhere*.”

There weren’t many professional singing opportunities for children in Dallas, however, so Pharo developed her chops at various oprys singing country standards. “That’s where I learned to work with a live band,” she informs.

She’d also begun writing her own songs, if not actually writing them *down*. Pharo vividly recalls an early songwriting experience: She was floating down the Amazon on a boat her father had chartered to facilitate his community-development work in Brazil. “We were spending the summer there,” she explains. “I was in my hammock on the boat singing this song over and over. My mom said, ‘What song is that? I like it,’ and I told her I made it up.”

When Pharo returned to Dallas, she bought her first writing journal and “just started going crazy.” “I’d lock myself in my room and write for hours,” she recounts. “My parents had to force me to come down and eat dinner.”

Pharo’s ambition next asserted itself in her choice of vocal coaches: “I loved Michael Jackson’s singing, so I decided I had to work with *his* vocal coach. I went online and found out that his name was Seth Riggs. I begged my father to call him.” She auditioned over the phone. Impressed by what he’d heard, Riggs said, “If you can get to Los Angeles, I’ll train you.” “So we went to L.A.,” Haley reports, noting, “I have the most supportive parents in the world.”

Pharo would return to L.A. frequently thereafter and eventually make her home there. On one visit, she was recruited by a family friend to sing in a choir Michael Jackson was forming to entertain fans at Neverland Ranch. While she was in the studio recording with the group,

Jackson was video-chatting with the producer. “Michael happened to hear my voice,” she says, “and pulled me out to layer some vocals. I just kept saying to myself, ‘This is not happening.’” It did happen, though, on the song “From the Bottom of My Heart,” which remains in the treasure trove of unreleased Jackson tracks.

On another trip to L.A., Pharo met a young backup singer for Justin Timberlake, who became a friend and later invited her to record some of her material. “It was at a makeshift pre-production studio, nothing fancy,” she says. “But that didn’t make it any less exciting.” If she needed further confirmation of her direction in life, cutting those three songs was it.

Pharo would go on to befriend and collaborate with a who’s who of musical talent, including will.i.am, whom she met backstage when the Black Eyed Peas were touring with Timberlake. “I just stumbled onto a really cool path and ended up getting to know some great people along the way,” she says. She met King Logan – who’d struck up a conversation after hearing her rehearsing in a studio lobby – not long after she’d recorded a couple of tracks with will.i.am, including an unreleased duet.

More recently, she collaborated with Roy Hamilton, who’s produced tracks for Britney Spears, among other luminaries. Two songs from Pharo’s album, “Gunpowder” and “Double Deep,” bear his stamp. Other contributors to the disc include the up-and-coming production duo Robosoul and songwriters Brian Lee (Lady Gaga), Jim Beanz (Timbaland), J. Mizzle (Timbaland), Travis Garland and Jordan Gatsby (JoJo), and JD Salbego. Grammy-winning Black Eyed Peas drummer Keith Harris also participated.

Pharo says of her collaborative method, “Basically, I get in the room with whomever I’m working with and say, ‘Alright, the walls are coming down; we’re going to get real honest in here – be ready.’”

In October 2011 she teamed with an unexpected pair for an alternate version of the impossibly catchy “Love Hangover” – Nick White (keyboardist with Bright Eyes and Omaha’s acclaimed Tilly and the Wall) and Buddy, frontman for the highly regarded L.A. indie rock band of the same name. “It’s really moody and kind of gritty, totally different from anything I’ve ever done,” she attests.

Pulling together the far-flung manifestations of Pharo’s creativity has been Andrew Dawson, winner of Grammy Awards for his work on Kanye West’s *Graduation* and *Late Registration*, both of which were named Best Rap Album. “Andrew has made some of my favorite records,” Pharo points out. “Being able to sit down with him and pick his brain has been one of the greatest opportunities of my life. He was really the missing piece I needed to connect all the dots of this record.”

“It was finally the right time to put it all together,” she reiterates. “I now have the stories; I now have the experiences under my belt. I’ve grown up.”

In some ways, however, Pharo isn't too far removed from that 11-year-old girl scribbling love songs in her journal. "I still write by myself in my bedroom every night before I go to bed," she says. "That has always kept me growing as a songwriter, and I think it always will."

# # #

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Luckie Pierre Entertainment

[hpmusic@luckiepierre.com](mailto:hpmusic@luckiepierre.com)

323-571-3868