

Hi! My name is Ryan Kershaw and I'm a musician, and do interviews and columns as part of the Muzic.net.nz team. Apart from playing my originals music I also like to help other musicians get to where they want to be, and provide articles, interviews, books, workshops and private coaching.

What do I like the most about muzic.net.nz? I have used the Muzic.net.nz websites services since 1999 and not once in that time has it sold out or ignored the grass roots underground acts. The team behind Muzic.net.nz is passionate about music and I am really happy to be involved.

Who are my favourite NZ musicians and bands? Some have recently ended but my favourites would be Crafty, Head Like A Hole, Shihad, Kora, Bury Me Low, After Forever, Arc of Ascent, El Schlong,.... there are heaps of great musos past and present that I may not listen to everyday but might be cool for readers to check out: Edmund Cake, Darcy Clay, Kasium, Paul Martin, Cripple Mr Onion, His Masters Voice, Just One Fix, Ward 10, Salmonella Dub, Tainted, Silly, Chugonaut, Trial By Fire, A.K.A, Frozen Alice, Diamond Doll, Seeds of Orbit, The Blue Grizzly Band, Loves Ugly Children, 8 Foot Sativa, Nailed Shut, Blackleaf Gardens... and some of my guitar students bands: Oslo Brown, Obsidious.

What NZ music do I have in my collection? Saidaya, The Clean, Peter Posa, Ward 10, Just One Fix, El Schlong, Kasium, Bury Me Low, Garageland, Head Like A Hole, Shihad, and a whole stack of demos from underground Kiwi bands and artists.

What advice would I like to give to NZ musicians?

Number 1: Take 100% responsibility - it is up to you and only you how you go with things. Your parents might not have been there for you, you might have a bad past, you might have been ripped off by someone in the industry... but none of that matters - it is still your choice how you go about your day, and if you are waiting for someone to hand you something on a plate you might want to look at another path!

Number 2: "E+R=O". It's a simple idea but so powerful. It means 'Event + response = equals outcome'. No you can't change the fact that you got rejected by a label, but you can choose your reaction and response. You can let it break you down, or choose to have it make you stronger.

Number 3: KEEP LEARNING! By learning more you will get better and more knowledgeable which will see you continue to grow. I always tell my guitar students that if you have a teacher that thinks he or she knows everything, then get another teacher! If you don't bother learning new skills, and rely on someone else too heavily, they might help you for a while but what happens if they move countries, or their relationship ends so that stops them from working with you? Then you would be back to yourself. No matter what happens when shit hits the fan, it always comes back to how well YOU can deal with it, so attend the seminars, read the books and keep learning.

Number 4: Recognise your value. Back when I first started to really connect with more people in the industry (we are all the industry from the buskers to school students to CEO's but I'm talking about people who make their living from music alone), I was an accomplished musician and music teacher but my confidence was lacking because I would put others on too high of a pedestal. After enough crap happens, you start to realise that you are good enough. If someone asks you what your guitar lessons are worth and you say they are 'ok' or that they can get them cheap - what do you think that person will believe? They will believe that they are just OK and that they aren't worth too much. But if you have the ability, and you charge a higher price, you can put more money into better gear for teaching, better tools and little extras like coffee and tea for waiting students. It's similar with music - if you don't value yourself or your music others probably won't either. Raise your value of yourself and realise that you have just as much right to be happy as the person with the fancy job title.

Number 5: KEEP GOING! You'll face a lot as a musician - confidence issues, money problems, difficult band relationships, backstabbing or prejudice and more. I've had that and I've also been ripped off by people here in little old NZ, by people that I trust. I've had the substance abuse dramas and the false rumours, doubts, hit the brick walls with radio, and seen what I believed to be great things be corrupted by shallow business deals. But I'm at a stage now where I just don't care about that. Why? Because I've learned from my mistakes, I'm on a continuing journey to better myself and I have realised that a self criticising attitude gets you nowhere. So my last bit of advice would be enjoy the creative process without just waiting for the end result, and keep going!

What do I think could be done to make the NZ music industry even better?

For the industry:

I feel that we should keep working to build the bridge between schools and the industry, with real world advice and knowledge rather than just working to get a certificate, and I think mainstream radio needs to support local bands more regardless of their business acumen (I know it's an oldie but a goodie).

Sometimes the industry seems to have tendency to wait until something is "successful" to really support it. In a way that can be human nature but it is really disheartening as a musician. It would be hard to give one specific solution to this problem, though we can try things to support the music we like rather than hate on what we don't like.

And most importantly - support new ideas rather than trying to stop them or one up them. Instead, realise that the person that came up with those ideas just wants to help people and it would be a better idea to work with them, rather than try and try and stop something good from happening out of insecurity.

For artists:

The biggest thing though that I think could be done is for all of us individually is to develop our own confidence and do what we can do to help. No amount of yelling at people is going to make them change, so if we hit a brick wall (e.g. with radio), then turn in a different direction and get past the wall - don't just sit there for years banging your head against it!

It's also great for artists to actually put the effort in to learn about the industry. It's all good sitting on your arse and saying no one is helping me but if you learn what's involved you'll see it's not always as easy as it sounds and that if you want help, think 'who is helping the people that I want help from'. Often they are trying their best and can't help everyone. Realise that YOU ARE PART OF THE INDUSTRY - so what are YOU doing to help other people in it?

Don't rely on funding. If you think there is no way to make a music video without funding then you don't have the guts to push through the rest of the obstacles that will come your way. Open up a band account, put in \$25 each a week. That's one hundred a week and in 10 weeks you'll have the funds to start the radio quality single. If you don't have money then busk. You'll find a way if you really want it bad enough.

What do I love the most about the NZ music industry? You look deeper than the mainstream and see some of the most talented musicians in the world playing some amazing echo flute in a sweaty bar somewhere, or singing an amazing soprano line at a school in Mangere, or playing music they love in a country club in Te Awamutu. You stop, relax and listen to what's going on and get reminded of what it really comes back to... and THAT is what I love about the NZ Music Industry :)