

Musings on Musos: A Thematic Analysis of the Working Conditions Experienced by New Zealand Musicians

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Abstract

The labour conditions in creative industries, such as the music industry, are complex. For instance, the deterioration of the 9-to-5 workday and the rise of project-based work has given creative workers more autonomy and pleasure in their work (Florida, 2002, 2005; Howkins, 2001; Leadbeater, 1999). However, other conditions that accompany creative work, such as precarity and insecurity, can result in stressful experiences for creative workers (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009). The purpose of this research, then, is to explore the conditions and subjective experiences of three musicians working in the New Zealand music industry, and to obtain an account of the challenges these workers may face. Developing a deeper understanding of creatives' experiences in the music industry is useful, because a significant amount of public money is given to New Zealand On Air and the New Zealand Music Commission to support the growth of this industry (New Zealand Music Commission, 2013; Scott & Craig, 2012). However, these government bodies have not published any research regarding the lived experiences of New Zealand music workers, or investigated the personal issues musicians may face when it comes to working successfully in the industry. The research is therefore intended to shed light on the upsides and downfalls of working in the industry, and is guided by the question: What are the experiences of New Zealand musicians regarding the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry?

In order to answer this research question, one-on-one responsive interviews were conducted with three self-identified musicians who work in New Zealand's music industry (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was then used to analyse and interpret the data set. Five major themes were found to be present in the data. These include the sense among the musicians that the New Zealand music scene is small; the presence of career uncertainty; the importance of authenticity; cultural entrepreneurialism; and the existence of cultural intermediaries in the musicians' working lives. Overall, it was found that the music industry provides significant opportunities for musicians to have positive working experiences. However, these experiences may not be felt by other musicians in different circumstances, who may not be able to manage the challenges of the industry as easily as those musicians interviewed. This research therefore ends with the recommendation that further measures by the government could be taken, such as the reinvigoration of

the PACE (Pathway to Arts and Cultural Employment) scheme (Shuker, 2008), in order to make good work experiences more widely accessible to those working in the music industry.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the research

The creative industries concept, to which the music industry pertains, was first developed in 1997 by Tony Blair's labour government. Defined as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (Department of Media Culture and Sport, 1998, p. 3), the creative industries were no longer perceived as "peripheral to the 'real economy'" (Pratt, 2004, p. 19), but were instead considered a means for competitive advantage within society. Accordingly, governments and organisations across the globe, including New Zealand, looked to facilitate and capitalise on this travelling policy and their creative industries, coming to view creativity as a valuable commodity that could overcome economic, cultural and social disparities (Florida, 2002; Hartley, 2005; Hartley et al. 2013; Leadbeater, 1999; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999; Prince, 2010a, 2010b; Ross, 2009; Volkerling, 2010). Such an ideology led to more money and support, more jobs, and more opportunities to pursue creative entrepreneurialism (Florida, 2002; Lawn, 2006; Volkerling, 2001), but little attention was given to the complex and disadvantaging labour conditions that accompanied the creative industries field (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Oakley, 2011). Therefore, the proposed research is designed to offer a more detailed picture of how one such creative industry operates, namely the New Zealand music industry, and to illustrate the possible work-related issues and hurdles that music workers may face.

The labour conditions in creative industries, such as the music industry, are complex. For instance, the deterioration of the 9-to-5 workday and the rise of project-based work has given creative workers more autonomy and pleasure in their work (Florida, 2002, 2005; Howkins, 2001; Leadbeater, 1999). However, other conditions that accompany creative work, such as precarity and insecurity, can result in stressful experiences for creative workers (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009). The literature that examines the lived experiences of creative workers is growing in industries such as film, television and fashion (Dex, Willis, Paterson & Sheppard, 2000; Neff, Wissinger & Zukin, 2005; Ursell, 2000; Rowlands, 2009; Rowlands & Handy, 2012; Tennant, 2012; Willis & Dex, 2003). There is also a growing body of research that considers the music industry, however the majority of this research is from an overseas context and focuses on the experiences of workers in North America and Europe (Bennet, 2007; Cooper & Wills, 1989; Coulson, 2012; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Sternbach, 1995; Umney & Kretsos, 2014, 2015; van den Eynde, Fisher & Sonn, 2015; Wills & Cooper, 1987, 1988; Zwaan & ter Bogt, 2009; Zwaan, ter Bogt & Raaijmakers, 2009).

Although the scholarship in the area of music does appear in some respects to reinforce the presence of creative labour themes, such as the precarity of the working conditions, the love creative workers feel towards their work, the compulsory entrepreneurialism required of creative workers, and the importance of social networks, some differences also emerge, such as the absence of instrumental social networks (Coulson 2012). The literature that examines the experiences of creative workers in a New Zealand context is limited, and although some research exists looking at workers in the music industry (Scott, 2012), there has been more written that focuses on the film and television industries (Rowlands, 2009; Rowlands & Handy, 2012; Tennant, 2012). Other literature that exists regarding the New Zealand music industry focuses more on the history of the music industry, government policy, and the benefits the music industry provides to audiences and the economy (Bourke, 2010; Dix, 2005; Scott & Craig, 2012; Shuker, 1998, 2008; Shuker & Pickering, 1994; Volkerling, 2010), rather than addressing the individual experiences of labour conditions in the industry.

Developing a deeper understanding of creatives' experiences in the music industry is useful, because a significant amount of public money is given to New Zealand On Air and the New Zealand Music Commission to support the growth of this industry (New Zealand Music Commission, 2013; Scott & Craig, 2012). Over recent years, these bodies have become increasingly accountable for how they spend public money in areas of the industry. According to Craik (2005), this focus is a response to the rise of the global creative industries discourse and a shift towards a market-centric cultural policy approach. That is, governments around the globe are expecting artists to provide economic justifications for continued support (Caust, 2003; Galloway & Dunlop, 2007; Garnham, 2005). It is not enough for the creative products to enlighten or shape national identity (Garnham, 2005), rather, the creative expressions must contribute to gross domestic product, offer further employment opportunities, brand the country, and even enable the success of other industries, such as tourism (Davies & Sigthorsson, 2013; Hartley, 2007). Accordingly, these governments channel expenditure towards mass cultural products, that are attractive to audiences (Caust, 2003; Craik, 2005, 2007; Hesmondhalgh, 2008) and which, inevitably, produce tensions and stresses that creative entrepreneurs are forced to navigate and overcome in order to survive. In other words, the structure of support creates conditions that influence the working lives and creative processes of artists and yet, to date, these government bodies have not published any research regarding the lived experiences of New Zealand music workers, or investigated the personal issues musicians may face when it comes to working successfully in the industry. Thus, this research could offer insights into areas in which musicians feel they need more support.

Furthermore, understanding the complexities and hardship that creative workers might face could be useful given that the creative industries conditions of flexible, short-term, project based work are starting to pervade other industries of the economy (Davidson, 2015). For example, the rise of 'zero hour contracts', where employees have to be available for work but employers do not have to guarantee a minimum number of hours, have proliferated in a number of fast-food chains around the world, including New Zealand (O'Meara, 2014). The current New Zealand government does not seem to be concerned about the risks of labour casualisation. The Prime Minister, Hon John Key, was quoted as saying that people

should get better “advice” regarding these zero hour contracts, and that “people should be careful to understand what they were signing up for” (as quoted in O’Meara, 2014, para. 22). However, if these labour conditions continue to become pervasive in multiple labour markets, then workers will not have a choice regarding accepting these flexible contracts; ‘advice’ will simply no longer suffice in these cases. Therefore, understanding how these labour conditions affect workers before they become the norm is worthwhile, even if this understanding comes through a small contribution, such as this proposed research.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the conditions and subjective experiences of three musicians working in the New Zealand music industry, and to obtain an account of the challenges these workers may face. The research question that will be addressed is:

What are the experiences of New Zealand musicians regarding the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry?

To clarify, *experiences* refers to the subjective thoughts, feelings, meanings and interpretations that the participants associate with the labour conditions of the music industry, which are “socially produced and reproduced” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 14). *New Zealand musicians* are those who self-identify as a musician and have been employed in a New Zealand context. For example, this employment may be in the form of record sales or paid music gigs. *Labour* in this study will refer to the type of work that is “geared to the production of original or distinctive commodities that are primarily aesthetic and/or symbolic-expressive, rather than utilitarian and functional” (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009, p. 416). This research therefore considers all work that participants undertake in relation to music production, which includes not only the creation of the musical products, but also other ancillary work that is necessary for these products to succeed, such as relevant promotional or administrative work. *Conditions* refer to the nature of labour within the music industry. As Marx (1997) points out, research questions should be designed to address theoretical problems, social issues and/or extend the work of previous empirical findings. My contention is that this research question will be able to address all three elements. Exploring the lived experience of New Zealand musicians could not only substantiate current findings on the labour conditions of

creative workers, but potentially offer new perspectives on how these conditions influence musicians' work.

I have singled out the New Zealand music industry for exploration, not only because of the lack of research in the field, but because it is an industry that initially had limited government intervention and was dominated by overseas record labels who exploited New Zealand artists if they had commercial potential (Bourke, 2010; Dix, 2005; Shuker, 2008; Shuker & Pickering, 1994). The assumption of this research, then, is that the labour conditions in New Zealand's music industry will offer insights into how the working conditions have been impacted by the influence of government and market regulation. I intend to conduct semi-structured interviews with three self-identified musicians who work in New Zealand's music industry. These musicians must have received some sort of support from New Zealand On Air, which could include financial and/ or promotional support, in order to gain a holistic view of New Zealand's music industry and its players. The variables that will be examined include the conditions and the experiences that they each describe. However, it is important to note that as this research will be conducted from a qualitative, interpretivist approach, analysis of these variables is not the goal of the researcher. Instead, the researcher's role "is to understand everyday or lay interpretations, as well as supplying social science interpretations, and to move from these towards an explanation" (Mason, 2002, p. 178). Themes will instead be used to analyse and organise the data in this research, in order to look for commonalities across the data and to understand the phenomenon of labour experiences in the New Zealand music industry (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1.2 Situating the researcher in the study

I grew up in a very musical environment - my mother was a piano teacher for the first sixteen years of my life, and most days after school and on Saturday mornings she would teach piano lessons at our home. She encouraged me to learn music too from a young age, so most of my schooling life was filled with flute lessons and band practices outside of school hours. Although not a musician himself, my dad was what you would call an audiophile - he had a great collection of music albums and had a set of impressively large speakers that he would often play his albums

through. I feel that growing up in this environment taught me to appreciate not only the value of music as a craft, but also the time-intensive nature of honing musical skills. I came to understand rather quickly that people do not just pick up musical instruments and intuitively play them - hours and hours of dedicated hard-work must in fact take place before anyone will want to listen to you in a music venue, let alone want to pay to do so. I believe this is why looking at the labour conditions in the music industry is interesting to me. There is a very common understanding that creative workers such as musicians do what they do for fun and because they love it, it is not really seen as real, *legitimate* 'work' (Bain, 2005; Dubois, Méon & Pierru, 2016). However, like all occupations, musicians spend time, effort and often their own money towards producing a 'good', therefore I believe if people want to enjoy goods made by musicians, then the musicians need to be paid fairly for their efforts.

Beyond my musical background, I undertook a Bachelor of Communication Studies from 2011-2013 and was accepted into the Creative Industries major. Much of the scholarship offered across the papers of this major connected again with my sentiments towards the music industry. By taking a critical look at the concept of the creative worker and the apparent freedom and "psychic income" (Oakley, 2009, p. 22) that they receive in favour of actual money, the theory that we looked at often exposed a slightly darker underside to the nature of work in the creative industries. I came to understand that workers in these industries are experiencing an increasingly precarious and casualised work place, with low wages, self-exploitation and competition as the norm (Cohen, 2012). Although flexible working arrangements do, to some extent, have benefits of freedom and control, ultimately creative people are expected to carry the risks and costs of creative projects, and are left with no contractual benefits such as sick pay, or a union to go to for support; if something goes wrong, then they only have themselves to blame (Cohen, 2012; McRobbie, 2002a).

As a researcher I have a bias in the research, as my background has given me more of a critical lens in viewing the labour conditions in New Zealand's music industry, and I am also skeptical about the extent to which cultural policy bodies give New Zealand musicians the support they need. I will ensure that I address this bias

through employing a self-reflective, 'responsive interviewing' approach (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This model argues that both the researcher and the participant are human beings and that throughout the interview, both will interact and influence each other. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest that being self-reflective is key to employing this model, stating that researchers "need to continually examine their own understandings and reactions" (p. 31) through sensitising themselves to their own biases. By learning to compensate for how these biases may slant my research, for example by avoiding asking research participants leading questions, I will attempt to lessen the impact that any of my biases have upon the research.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis continues by addressing the relevant background to the research. In the coming chapter, I explore the history of New Zealand's music industry, including how it is structured and influenced by the concept of the 'creative economy' (Howkins, 2001), as well as how these conceptualisations have affected the development of cultural policy. The work of more specific cultural policy funding bodies in New Zealand is also explored here. Significant changes and developments in both the global and local music industries will also be considered in this background chapter.

In the literature review chapter, I consider scholarship on the nature of labour in the creative industries, particularly the precarity of creative work, intrinsic motivations, creative entrepreneurialism and networking. My discussion in this chapter has been designed to shed light on both the positive and negative influences of pursuing creative work. Admittedly, the aforementioned concepts are interrelated, so while the chapter attempts to offer a linear assessment of the nature of creative work, there is inevitable overlap.

In the methodology and method chapter, I discuss my epistemology before outlining the interview processes and thematic analysis that are used for my data gathering and analysis. Not only are these methods explained, but consideration is given to their value and anticipated drawbacks.

The data analysis chapter details the responses of my interviewees according to themes that emerged in the data. In some ways my data analysis veers away from common practices of writing up research findings. Instead of just explaining each theme and offering evidence of support from the interviews, I have opted to also explore the significance of my findings. My understanding is that questions of significance usually emerge in the final discussion chapter, but to offer a holistic and critical account of the data, my findings and discussion are treated simultaneously.

In my final chapter, then, I have taken the discussions of significance and ‘zoomed out’. That is, my conclusions consider the wider implications of my findings to the music industry, musicians and policy makers. The chapter also identifies the limitations of my research and offers future research directions.

Chapter 2

Background

Introduction

In order to contextualise my research into the labour conditions experienced by New Zealand musicians, this chapter will offer a brief history of New Zealand's music industry, with reference to how transnational trends and national broadcasters have affected the development of the industry. The increase of government intervention in the industry from the 1980s onward will then be considered, outlining how various government ideologies have significantly altered the state of the industry over the past decades. Finally, in order to offer an account of the current state of the music industry, the impact digitisation has had over the New Zealand music industry will be outlined.

2.1 A brief history of the New Zealand music industry

As Bourke (2010) states, there has not been a time where New Zealanders have been "a people without songs" (p. 1). Māori music existed in the form of haka, karanga, poi and waiata prior to the arrival of Pākehā settlers, who brought with them European instruments and sheet music, and it did not take long for both Māori and Pākehā to borrow and appropriate elements of each other's musical styles. The growth of globalisation after the First World War further impacted the development of New Zealand music (Bourke, 2010). New recording technologies, the rise of radio technology and easier distribution flows allowed the United States to become the "dominant influence" over the local industry in New Zealand from 1918 onwards (p. 1), both in terms of records broadcasted and sold, and also heavily in terms of stylistic influence. Indeed, as Bourke (2010) suggests, "music, like a virus, respects no borders" (p. 4), therefore the history of New Zealand's music industry firmly

illustrates the nation's interaction with global popular music culture from the early twentieth century onwards.

The end of the Second World War saw the development of the first song to have been entirely processed in New Zealand, which marked the start of New Zealand's late-to-develop recording industry at the end of the 1940s (Bourke, 2010; Owen, 2002). Although recording facilities were present in New Zealand prior to this, artists had to travel to Australia if they wanted to fully record, press and release a disc, as there was no record manufacturing facilities available locally. Additionally, the British-owned recording company, HMV, essentially held a monopoly over the local recording industry, and was simply not interested at all in supporting local artists - an attitude which Bourke (2010) describes as "a textbook case of cultural imperialism" (p. 151). As Bourke notes, a spokesperson for HMV at the time questioned whether there was adequate demand for locally recorded and manufactured music, adding "it is doubtful if such recordings could compete commercially with imported records of the best overseas artists" (as quoted in Bourke, 2010, p.157). Therefore, much of New Zealand's music industry was dominated by overseas content, creating barriers to entry for local musicians and limiting opportunities for New Zealanders to be exposed to music that catered to their cultural citizenship needs.

The release of *Blue Smoke* (1948) however, "marked the real birth" of a home-grown recording industry (Bourke, 2010, p. 155). The record was released by New Zealand's first local record company, Tanza, an acronym for "To Assist New Zealand Artists". Tanza was started by the Radio Corporation of New Zealand, a publicly owned manufacturer of radios and gramophones (Bourke, 2010, 2015). The label was committed to supporting local artists, and was driven to challenge the monopoly HMV held over the New Zealand music market. *Blue Smoke* proved to be a commercial success, and a number of new local songs released on Tanza followed, which suggests New Zealanders did in fact have a taste for local sounds.

From the early to mid-1950s, country, Hawaiian and indigenous Māori songs were the main three popular genres recorded by HMV and Tanza (Dix, 2005). But 1955 saw the arrival of rock'n'roll in New Zealand, which rapidly changed the face of the

local popular music industry. Rock'n'roll drove up record retail sales, fuelled the rise of music promoters, and also generated the establishment of a large number of small independent record labels, such as Zodiac and Viking (Grigg, 2013a, 2013b). As Bourke (2010, p. 299) states, "HMV's original hesitancy towards local acts left the field wide open for competitors", which therefore caused the local industry in Auckland to boom. Not long after, HMV established a more supportive stance towards local musicians, and the HMV studios soon became the dominant space for local music recording, both for independent label clients and for artists on their own label (McLennan, 2013). HMV released more than 100 singles by New Zealand artists between 1959 and 1964, which Bourke (2010) suggests illustrates "more focus and commitment to the local market" (p. 302).

However, the majority of singles recorded in New Zealand by the end of the decade were cover versions of international rock'n'roll songs, and only a very small number of original songs written by New Zealanders were ever published onto disc (Bourke, 2010; McLennan, 2015). Bourke (2010) suggests there were multiple reasons for this. Often there would be a delay in the release of foreign songs in New Zealand markets, so after hearing these international hits on shortwave radio, local artists would record a cover prior to the release of the original. Furthermore, it was easier for song publishers to make money from imported tracks, therefore there was not a commercial incentive to foster the local industry. Additionally, New Zealand rock'n'roll recordings were shunned by the public radio broadcaster - the largely conservative radio executives and broadcasters found the new popular musical style "abhorrent" (Bourke, 2010, p. 323), and the handful of more liberal broadcasters generally preferred to play overseas artists, rather than the local recordings. Nevertheless, a lot of local music was broadcast through live broadcasts, which boosted the profile of a number of local artists (Bourke, 2010).

The late 1960s and early 1970s marked a shift in public and media support for New Zealand music (Owen, 2002). New Zealand's first pirate radio station, *Radio Hauraki*, arrived on the scene in 1966 (Cammick, 2014). *Radio Hauraki* broke away from the conservatism of the state broadcaster and played 24-hours of rock'n'roll to the local New Zealand audience, with a self-imposed quota of 20% local music (Dix, 2005). The presence of *Radio Hauraki* pushed the government to begin broadcasting more

rock'n'roll, both local and international, which Dix (2005) notes gave “Kiwi rock a well-deserved and long overdue boost. For the first time, New Zealand radio was paying local artists a little more than mere lip service” (p. 82). Television was also a broadcasting medium that was providing support and airplay for local artists, with shows that featured live performances of local musicians, such as *C'mon* and *Happen Inn*, proliferating in this period (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2016a).

Furthermore, Dix (2005) suggests that as the APRA Silver Scroll award for New Zealand song writing increased in industry importance, record companies became more supportive towards artists recording songs they had written themselves. Notable bands such as Fourmyula reached the top of the New Zealand charts on multiple occasions with songs they had written (Bollinger, 2013), which illustrates that there were commercial benefits in record labels supporting original music written by New Zealanders.

However, the recording industry rapidly began to decline in the mid to late-1970s (Owen, 2002). Ratings started to dictate the increasingly commercial, personality-driven radio industry, which rendered music as an insignificant “distraction between commercials” (Dix, 2005, p. 178). Furthermore, as Dix outlines, multinational record labels such as HMV and Polygram had managed to position themselves as the dominant players in the scene, pushing the independents that had proliferated a decade earlier to the periphery of the industry. With this, “having gained the upper hand” (p. 133), the major labels became more risk-averse, taking their focus away from investing in local musicians and more towards distributing safer international content from their parent companies. Although record sales were at their highest in 1974, local recording had gone down, and less local music featured in the New Zealand charts (Dix, 2005). This decline was furthered in 1975, when the Labour government in power at the time classified records as non-cultural goods, and almost doubled record sales tax (McLennan, 2015). The move caused prices to increase and record sales to decline, therefore impacting the bottom lines of record companies, and lessening the likeliness of investment in local recordings. Rock acts such as Split Enz moved to Australia, where they hoped to find more success (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2013). Indeed, it was clear that the short-lived period of local artist support had been interrupted by the influence of commercialism; radio broadcasters were chasing the advertising dollar, and record

companies prioritised safer international hits that had already had success in overseas markets.

The increasing commercial focus and pressure in the music industry pushed the rock genre underground and out of the mainstream during this period (Dix, 2005). But the genre nevertheless survived, and in the early 1980s, independent labels were some of the most important in developing the local industry. Flying Nun was perhaps the most notable independent label of this period, established in 1981 and spawning acts such as The Clean and Chris Knox (White, 2013). Low-tech, inexpensive recordings took place in basements, bedrooms and lounges, and the undercapitalised label became known for their “do-it-yourself post-punk attitude” (Flying Nun, n.d., para 3). A number of their signed artists went on to have success in the UK and US markets (White, 2013). The success of Flying Nun’s DIY sound illustrated at the time that the major record companies were starting to become not as essential to the local industry as they once were (Dix, 2005).

2.2 Government influence over the industry

The 1980s and 1990s saw a fluctuation of highs and lows for the local music industry (Shuker & Pickering, 1994; Shuker 1998). In 1979, the Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council of New Zealand introduced recording and touring grants for New Zealand popular musicians, which provided significant financial compensation for the top local independent labels (Scott & Craig, 2012). Furthermore, in 1984, the Fourth Labour Government reduced the record sales tax down to 20%, and then abolished it a year later (McLennan, 2015), which boosted sales throughout the 1980s (Shuker & Pickering, 1994). Despite government support developments, which marked a shift away from the conservative elitism of previous governments in their attitudes towards popular music, the policies had a negligible impact upon improving the percentage of domestic record sales or reducing the dominance of overseas music (Scott & Craig, 2012). The industry was unable to support musicians as full-time workers, and there was minimal media support of, or commitment to, the broadcasting of local music (Shuker & Pickering, 1994).

The low percentage of local music airplay was further intensified by the 1989 restructuring of New Zealand's broadcasting industry by the Fourth Labour Government. This move made New Zealand's radio environment the most deregulated in the world (Shanahan & Duignan, 2005), and also set a precedent for the largely commercially-dominated broadcasting environment that exists in New Zealand today (Myllylahti, 2015). Shuker and Pickering (1994) argue that the changes towards deregulation meant that both private and state radio stations began to tend more towards music that had been "tried and tested" in an international market (p. 271), as they feared that playing too much local music would cause a drop in ratings and advertising income. Furthermore, the radio industry argued that the local music available at the time was inferior in technical quality to imported sounds, therefore it was not commercially feasible to increase the proportion of local music on their playlists (Neill, 2005; Shuker & Pickering, 1994). It was this attitude that stymied the development of the industry, because the major record labels at the time "pointed to a lack of radio support as an excuse not to record more New Zealand acts" (Dix, 2005, p. 9). Shuker and Pickering (1994) therefore propose that a crucial policy intervention that would have helped the industry greatly at the time was a compulsory radio quota of local music. They argue that this would have helped foster the interest in and sales of local music, which would then have helped sustain the livelihoods of a wider number of local artists. The idea of a compulsory quota had been debated in political circles from 1986, and saw a wider campaign supporting the quota kick-off in the late 1980s, which led to a Private Member's Bill advocating the quota in 1989 (Shuker, 2008; Shuker & Pickering, 1994). However, the neoliberal political climate at the time challenged the success of the bill, and the victory of the National party in the 1990 general election caused the bill to lose any momentum it had successfully gained; as such, it did not get past a second reading in Parliament (Shuker, 2008).

Amidst these changes in the music industry, significant shifts were occurring in the wider realm of work in New Zealand. Such changes included an increase of casual, short-term contracts, a decrease in union representation, and the shift towards more flexible working arrangements where people no longer were working five days a week for the same, consistent employer (du Fresne, 2013). The shift in these working arrangements were not just restricted to New Zealand; such changes were

being seen more widely throughout the world as a result of widespread neoliberal economic reform under the Reagan government in the United States, the Thatcher government in the United Kingdom, and, to a lesser extent, governments in Australia and Canada as well (Volkerling, 2010). The shift from the organised capitalism that was prevalent in the mid-20th century to neoliberal capitalism from the 1980s onward meant that privatisation, market liberalisation and efficiency were the watchwords of the era (McGuigan, 2014). As a result, in places like New Zealand, state-owned enterprises were sold to private owners, regulation was trimmed down, particularly in the finance sector, welfare programmes were cut back, and the once plentiful source of secure jobs in the manufacturing industry were increasingly moved offshore to lower-wage labour providers (Goldfinch, 1998; du Fresne, 2013). Indeed, Standing (2011) suggests that, in combination with the influence of globalisation, the roll-out of stringent neoliberal economic reform around the world led to the weakening of workers' power and the rise of the idealised neoliberal worker, which he terms the "precariat": these workers are flexible, only work when required by capital, and have little to no job security whatsoever. Although some contest that not all nonstandard, flexible workers are in a precarious, insecure position (du Fresne, 2013), this period nevertheless saw fundamental shifts take place in New Zealand's labour market, and nonstandard work has ever since increasingly become the new norm for a large number of New Zealand workers (Council of Trade Unions, 2013).

2.3 The beginning of NZOA

Although Scott and Craig (2012, p. 149) indicate that the neoliberal ideology of the various governments throughout the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand meant "the arts, culture and popular music withered under benign neglect", arts policies were never totally eradicated (Skilling, 2005). One government support body that was set-up in 1991 was New Zealand On Air (Shuker, 2008). It was recognised that amidst a widely deregulated media environment in New Zealand, the establishment of this body was crucial to ensure that New Zealanders had "a diverse range of broadcasting services that would not otherwise be available on a commercial basis" and that it was important "to encourage broadcasters to maintain a sustained commitment to programmes reflecting New Zealand identity and

culture” (NZOA, n.d., as cited in Shuker, 2008, p. 274). New Zealand On Air intended to achieve this by funding local content for radio and television, a major part of which included local music content.

The first decade of New Zealand On Air saw multiple initiatives taken to try improve the state of the New Zealand music industry. As Norris and Pauling (2012) note, at the time of New Zealand On Air’s establishment in 1991, the dominating commercial radio stations with an 80% audience share played 1.9% New Zealand music. To address the lack of exposure for New Zealand artists, one initiative developed by New Zealand On Air was a music video funding scheme. Music videos were recognised as being an influencing factor on youth music interests, which then had an impact on commercial radio station playlists (Norris & Pauling, 2012). The production of a larger quantity of higher-quality music videos was therefore seen as a tool to boost the amount of New Zealand music being played on both radio and television (Norris & Pauling, 2012). This initiative was considered a success in the New Zealand On Air’s 1992 annual report. As they state, they felt the programme had helped achieve “effective exposure for New Zealand music on both radio and television” (NZOA, 1992, as quoted in Norris & Pauling, 2012, p. 129). Shuker (2008) suggests that this music video funding scheme had a “snowball effect” (p. 275): the broadcast of local music on television led to higher record sales, which then pushed more local music on radio playlists, which in turn also increased sales and chart listings. In other words, it was clear through the operations of the video funding scheme that increased exposure led to increased career opportunities and financial return for local musicians.

However, it was recognised that this music video initiative was not totally “solving the problem”, and that New Zealand On Air needed to “infiltrate the play list” of radio stations more effectively in order to see improvements in the music industry (Smyth, 2011, as cited in Norris & Pauling, 2012, p. 129). The *Kiwi Hit Disc* was therefore established to penetrate the airwaves, which was a compilation of local music copied to CD and then distributed for free to New Zealand radio stations every two months. The intention with the *Hit Disc* was to ensure that “every Programme director in every NZ radio station has access to a broadcast quality copy of new singles which have commercial radio airplay potential” (NZOA, n.d.,

as quoted in Shuker, 2008, p. 275), as it was identified that New Zealand radio stations were starting to become more willing to play more local music, but had trouble accessing it (Norris & Pauling, 2012). Furthermore, another initiative designed by New Zealand On Air to increase the likelihood of local music being broadcast was the Radio Hits Funding Scheme (Norris & Pauling, 2012). This meant that record companies were given the incentive of potential reimbursement if they produced local music suitable for commercial radio playlists, which therefore decreased some of the potential financial risks connected with producing new music. Such initiatives highlight New Zealand On Air's "proactive marketing approach" to local music, which was furthered when they joined forces with music industry groups in 1997 and formed the Kiwi Music Action Group (Norris & Pauling, 2012, p. 193). In April 1997, this group created the first Kiwi Music Week (now known as New Zealand Music Month), which was a national campaign dedicated to boosting New Zealand music broadcasting exposure.

All of the above efforts clearly had a positive impact on airplay of local content, which went from 1.9% in 1991 to 10% in 1999 (Norris & Pauling, 2012). However, despite this increase in the broadcasting of local content, Shuker (2008) notes that "at the end of the 1990s the vital signs of the New Zealand music industry remain mixed" (p. 276). The industry still was not able to support musicians as full-time performers, airplay of local content still remained relatively low, and musicians were being forced overseas in order to make a dent on the global music marketplace. More work was required for the industry to reach its full potential.

2.4 The creative industries concept & the music industry

The Fifth Labour Government that arrived into office in 1999 recognised that more could be done to effectively support the development of New Zealand's music industry. The government, led by Helen Clark, noted the importance of the arts and cultural work in New Zealand society and the social and economic benefits to growing a strong creative industries sector (Clark, 2000). Such an approach was clearly influenced by the global creative industries concept that developed in the late 1990s (Hartley et al. 2013; Ross, 2009). This concept was incubated by the shift in thinking during the dot-com years, which encouraged a "different model of

valuation and innovation from the customary patterns in the technology industries” (Ross, 2009, p. 16). Internet-based innovation focused on creativity and ideas, as opposed to technical development, and this change in focus saw the rise in creativity as a mantra in management discourse (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999/2005; Ross, 2009). The economic potential of creative ideas promised by the emerging new media industries therefore elicited government interest around the world in the untapped economic prospects of creative professions in cultural sectors (Ross, 2009), and the ‘creative industries’ became the solution to post-industrial economic problems (Hartley et al., 2013).

The new 1997 Labour government in the United Kingdom is commonly credited as being the first policymakers to put the ‘creative industries’ at the forefront of major policy plans (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Hartley et al., 2013, Ross, 2009). The creative industries were an important part of a broader Third Way model of government (Volkerling, 2010), which was an approach that combined neoliberal economics with “the social investment state” (Giddens, 1998, p. 117). A crucial document that outlines these plans is the 1998 *Creative Industries Mapping Document* by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS]. This document defines the ‘creative industries’ as “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (DCMS, 1998, p. 3).

The explicit economic focus on the creative industries was grown and developed in popular and academic literature (Florida, 2002, 2005; Hartley, 2005; Howkins, 2001; Leadbeater, 1999; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999), and with this, a broadening of the economic value of creativity that went beyond the creative industries occurred. The idea of the ‘creative economy’ materialised, as it was identified that creative professions ‘spilled over’ into areas outside of the creative industries, for example design workers who work in-house for a government department or an accounting firm (Hartley et al., 2013). Florida (2002, 2005) calls such workers the “creative class”, and it was the creative ability of workers in the creative industries that would be the “competitive advantage” driving this new economy (Florida, 2002, p. 5). These creative workers operate in communities, known as creative clusters

(Florida, 2002; Scott, 2000), where creative workers are cooperative, collaborative and harmonious with one another in their production of creative work. Concepts that centred around the benefits of the creative industries and the creative economy further picked up steam as exportable development strategies around the world due to the successes of the concept in Britain (Prince, 2010a), and have since been implemented by a diverse range of countries, including Russia, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Ross, 2009).

The Fifth Labour Government in New Zealand therefore similarly recognised the potential for the creative industries as being “among the key growth industries of the twenty-first century” (Clark, 2000, para. 13). In fact, they commissioned an assessment of the music industry entitled *Creating Heat* (New Zealand Music Industry Development Group, 2004), which determined that the industry was a vehicle for encouraging national pride. More specifically, however, the document recommended that New Zealand could gain national and international commercial success from its music industry by increasing government intervention. In keeping with the findings of *Creating Heat* and the discourses of the creative industries, the Fifth Labour Government began to implement a Third Way approach to governance (Volkerling, 2010). After fifteen years of government policy driven by free-market ideology, Clark made it clear that the “hands off days” were gone, and that government support of the promising creative sectors was crucial (Clark, 2007, para. 52).

Alongside biotechnology and information and communication technology, the creative industries were identified as one of three key industries for potential new growth, and music was seen as an important sector within this as having viable economic potential (Prince, 2010b). New Zealand On Air’s yearly budget was therefore doubled from NZ\$2million to \$3.78million in 2000, new funding initiatives such as an Album fund and a New Recording Artists fund were developed, and a voluntary broadcasting quota of playing local music was established in 2002 (Norris & Pauling, 2012; Shuker, 2008). The government also introduced the PACE (Pathway to Arts and Cultural Employment) scheme in November 2001, which was commonly described at the time as the “artists’ dole”, as it allowed artists who met certain criteria to receive the unemployment benefit

without having to actively seek additional work (Shuker, 2008, p. 278).

Furthermore, the New Zealand Music Commission was established in 2002, which was tasked with growing the New Zealand music industry both at home and overseas (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2016b). The Music Commission began a number of support initiatives that still continue today, including the *Outward Sound* programme that gives local artists assistance in gaining international market entry, the New Zealand Music Month in May, and informal and formal education programmes (Scott & Craig, 2012).

The above initiatives proved to have a valuable impact for the economic growth and success of the New Zealand music industry. In 2002 the quota of 13% was exceeded by 2.1%, and in 2005, an all-time high of 20.8% of New Zealand music broadcasted on commercial radio was recorded, surpassing the quota target of reaching 20% by 2006 (Shuker, 2008). Higher chart profiles were being recorded for local artists, local music was being played more overseas in Australia, Europe and North America, and royalty income had more than doubled from \$7million in 2000 to \$16.5 million in 2005 (Smith, 2005). Scott and Craig (2012) argue that government strategies that focus on the market success of musicians and the economic potential of creative output, such as those outlined above, illustrate how the government has operated as a 'promotional state' alongside the music market from 1999 onwards, rather than against it in a protectionist fashion. They suggest that rather than neoliberalism now being "over", the creative industries-focused policies initiated by the Fifth Labour Government instead attempted to enable "agents into the existing neoliberal economic order" (p. 151), such as helping musicians to work more effectively as "entrepreneurial subjects" in local and international music markets (p. 153). Indeed, New Zealand On Air and the later established New Zealand Music Commission have an undeniable market-focus in their music industry policies.

However, such an emphasis on commercial success in music industry policy has not been celebrated by all. Music journalist Gary Steel has criticised the favouring of funding commercially-viable music by New Zealand On Air as encouraging a "generic" sound for local artists to emulate (Steel, 2004, para. 7). Similarly, Mayes (2010) and Greive (2010, as cited in Norris & Pauling, 2012) both have critiqued the organisation for predominantly giving money to artists who are seen to be more

profitable, and say that the organisation neglects a wide range of artists who fall outside “the narrow definition of what represents New Zealand culture” (Mayes, 2010, p. 5). These concerns echo wider critiques present in literature on cultural policy, which indicate the economic focus of various cultural policy schemes around the world might pose limits and restrictions on a creative worker’s creativity (Caust, 2003; Craik, 2005). Additionally, a similar critique regarding the commercial focus of government music policy has been made by Scott and Craig (2012) in relation to the PACE programme for artists on the benefit. Although there is evidence of the programme’s successes (Fitzsimons, 2011), Scott and Craig (2012) have critiqued the requirement for those on the programme to demonstrate evidence of live performances, recordings and a media profile, as such market-focused eligibility requirements reflect the “transformation of the popular musician from counter-cultural figure to business person” (p. 153). Furthermore, former New Zealand On Air CEO Chris Prowse (2010, 2011, as cited in Norris & Pauling, 2012) has critiqued the music funding body for not being efficient with funds given to artists, suggesting that a large proportion of New Zealand music is produced each year without any financial support from the state whatsoever, therefore “money would be better spent promoting the broadcast of all kinds of New Zealand music to a wide variety of listeners” (2011, as quoted in Norris & Pauling, p. 140). Despite these criticisms however, New Zealand On Air and the New Zealand Music Commission have continued to play an integral role in facilitating the local music scene, and as Shuker (2008) suggests, it is the government’s readiness to support local sounds that has been a crucial factor in so much of the industry’s successes.

Nevertheless, New Zealand’s music economy still stands as being quite small when compared with music markets overseas. For example, in 2014 New Zealand’s music market was ranked 28th out of 50 territories by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (New Zealand Music Commission, 2015). Furthermore, to attain a Platinum certification in album sales in New Zealand requires the sale of 15,000 units (New Zealand Music Commission, 2015), whereas platinum certification in the United States requires the sale of 1,000,000 units (Recording Industry Association of America, n.d.). It could be argued that this is a concept relative to each country’s population size, however, perhaps a significant reason why smallness is felt here in New Zealand by local musicians is the geographic

isolation of the country (Homan, Cloonan & Cattermole, 2016). As Homan, Cloonan and Cattermole suggest, the “tyranny of distance” from international music markets is quite keenly felt in New Zealand by New Zealand musicians (p. 126).

Nonetheless, New Zealand still appears to have quite an active music community. Statistics New Zealand (2006, as cited in Scott & Craig, 2012) found that live musical performances were reported as the most frequent cultural activity amongst New Zealanders, and Creative New Zealand (2015) state that 49% of New Zealanders attended a concert or musical performance in 2014. It could be surmised, then, that although the New Zealand music community faces inevitable challenges in terms of population and geographic location, the government’s ‘promotional state’ approach to the music industry has had a lasting impact upon establishing a relatively thriving and supportive local music scene (Scott & Craig, 2012).

2.5 Digitisation and the music industry

During the early to mid-noughties, global music industry trends began to worry executive figures in the local music industry in New Zealand (Neill, 2005). The recording industry blamed the rise of the internet and peer-to-peer file sharing for causing a large decline in international music sales between 2001 and 2004, and there was fear that this would start to have trickle-down effects in smaller markets such as New Zealand (Ahrens, 2004; Neill, 2005). The major record labels in New Zealand at the time - all of which were branches of transnational record labels that sold more than 80% of the industry’s music (Ahrens, 2004) - made large cutbacks in staff, which meant there were fewer workers employed to seek out and develop new talent (Neill, 2005). Furthermore, RIANZ (now Recorded Music NZ) reported that piracy was costing the local industry approximately \$95 million each year, suggesting there was less money available to take risks investing in local artists (Neill, 2005). In response to the prevalence of the internet and the threat of piracy, stricter copyright laws were imposed by the New Zealand government, who passed the Copyright (Infringing File Sharing) Amendment Act (CIFSAA) in 2011 (Kay & Vance, 2011). ISPs became required by law to assist in targeting peer-to-peer file sharers, and by 2013, the first ‘pirate’ had been charged and fined in New Zealand for copyright violation (Keall, 2013).

However, not all agreed that policies such as CIFSAA were the right move for the interests of musicians. Although the law intended to protect the intellectual property of New Zealand artists through the reduction of online piracy, Curran (2011) argues it is merely the record companies' way of using their "muscle" in the New Zealand music industry "to protect their outdated business models", as opposed to embracing new means of distribution and creation of musical content (para. 6). Williamson and Cloonan (2007) similarly argue that transnational record companies have created a rhetoric that online piracy is an "epidemic" that plagues the wider music industries, whereas in reality it is merely affecting the business interests of these record companies (p. 308). Indeed, it has been identified that digital technologies in fact have disrupted the music industry in favour of independent musicians, as the sharing capabilities of these technologies actually allow musicians to bypass the gatekeeping role record companies have always maintained in the industry (Klein, Myer & Powers, 2016; Thomson, 2013; Young & Collins, 2010). Due to the proliferation of digital music stores, streaming services and social media, musicians increasingly have the ability to promote and distribute their music themselves (Scott, 2012). Additionally, musicians are able to now communicate more directly with their followers through the capabilities of social media (Potts, et al. 2008; Smith, 2009), and build stronger, more authentic relationships with these fans (Marwick & boyd, 2011). Such interactions allow for the increased development of emotional attachments between musicians and their followers, which therefore establishes commitment and continued interest in new music created (Kulash, 2010).

Nevertheless, the changing digital nature of the music industry has brought new problems for musicians. Klein et al. (2016) argue that the democratised nature of the music industry has led to greater competition amongst musicians for listeners, as there is now a vastly wider pool of music for consumers to choose from. Furthermore, Marshall (2012) proposes that consumers are listening to music in a more fragmented way, as the digital music marketplace facilitates the purchase of singles more easily, which is a far less profitable transaction than that of purchasing albums. Both these impacts have economic implications for musicians, as the promise for healthy financial compensation from record sales has declined (Young

& Collins, 2010), and their dependence on alternative revenue streams, such as touring and merchandise, has become more acute (Klein et al., 2016).

In light of the growing impact digital technology has had on the music industry, New Zealand On Air has implemented changes in their funding and promotion initiatives over the last five years that more closely reflect the growing presence and importance of digital technology in the industry (Norris & Pauling, 2012). In 2011, New Zealand On Air launched Making Tracks, which was a singles-based funding scheme that provided grants up to \$10,000 for New Zealand artists to produce a new song and/ or video. The content funded by the scheme had to have the potential of 'broadcast outcomes' through not only radio and television, but also online media outlets (Norris & Pauling, 2012), and the scheme's criteria had a notably digital focus, as artists could prove their eligibility by providing evidence of an online presence (New Zealand On Air, 2014).

In conjunction with addressing the online presence of artists, the Making Tracks scheme has recently undergone changes. Although the scheme funded songs that achieved 11.5 million plays or streams in 2015, and 109.5 million since the scheme began in 2011 (NZOA, 2015), it was announced in June 2016 that as of July the 1st 2016, the scheme would shift towards focussing more on the promotion of the content they produce (Arnold, 2016). The introduction of streaming services such as Spotify has further increased the accessibility of a wide range of music, therefore New Zealand On Air recognises helping artists invest in promotion and publicity will help them get their music heard by audiences in a competitive online environment (Arnold, 2016). The introduction of streaming services such as Spotify has further increased the accessibility of a wide range of music, therefore New Zealand On Air recognises that helping artists invest in promotion and publicity will enable them to get their music heard by audiences in a competitive online environment (Arnold, 2016). The new scheme, titled New Tracks, was therefore developed to assist artists in "'getting noticed' among the plethora of available music" found on the internet (Caddick, 2010, p.6).

Conclusion

There have been a number of significant influences over the development of New Zealand's music industry. Transnational trends such as popular musical genres and the development of recording technologies have shaped the way the industry has progressed since the early 20th century onward, and the actions of local broadcasters have also had a tangible impact over the way the industry has grown. Additionally, the rise in government support for the local industry from the 1980s has also been a crucial factor in how the industry has unfolded, and from the turn of the 21st century, the influence of digitisation has also radically altered the power balance within the industry. All of these influencing factors over the development of the New Zealand music industry affect the current context in which local musicians work and particularly the conditions governing their work. Therefore it is useful to examine these influences in order to contextualise how musicians experience the labour conditions that currently exist in the industry.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the conditions and subjective experiences of three musicians working in the New Zealand music industry, and to obtain an account of the challenges these workers may face. Therefore, this literature review considers academic positions on the nature of creative work to contextualise the proposed research. The nature of work in the creative industries has been framed in both positive and more critical lights. As outlined in Chapter 2, a utopian perspective of the nature of work in the creative industries emerged in popular and academic literature in the late 1990s, which had a great deal of influence over policy development during this period (Florida, 2002, 2005; Howkins, 2001; Leadbeater, 1999; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999). These authors, and subsequently policymakers, had a more idealistic view of the working conditions in the creative industries, celebrating the deterioration of the 9-to-5 workday, the flexible nature of short-term, project-based work, and the blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure time. According to this literature, such working conditions bring a higher level of autonomy and creative control over the work creatives undertake, and workers, therefore, derive a great amount of pleasure from the creative process and final product.

However, what is missing from these quixotic accounts of the creative industries is the consideration of the complexities of creative labour conditions and the lived experiences of creative workers. Such emphasis on the economic gains of these industries has not only resulted in a boosterish view of the creative industries (Peck, 2005), but also the glossing over of the actual realities and processes of creative work (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009). This chapter will be dedicated to exploring

academic work that has investigated the lived realities of creative labour, in order to assess the idealistic claims made by those who adhere to the utopian perspective of the creative industries. Although there has not been a significant amount of scholarship regarding the working lives of those who work in the music industry, it is assumed that the working conditions within this industry are similar to those of other creative fields (Umney & Kretsos, 2014). Aspects of creative work, such as the precarious nature of working conditions, the love and passion workers feel towards their work, the requirements for entrepreneurial characteristics of creative workers, and the importance of social networking, are all applicable to work in the music industry. I would like to premise this review by stating that academic scholarship in the field of creative work cannot be approached in a linear fashion. Most of the concepts are interrelated, which inevitably means there will be a degree of repetition in the content to follow.

3.1 Precarious working conditions

The working conditions in the creative industries are commonly characterised as being irregular, stressful and inconsistent (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Gill, 2002, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Lee, 2007; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; McRobbie, 2002b, 2007; Neff et al., 2005). The reason for this can be traced back to the domination and power of big business figures in creative fields, known as cultural intermediaries, or 'the suits' (Negus, 2002; Scott, 2012). In the creative industries, industry intermediaries play an important role in the mediating position between cultural producers and audiences (Broekhuizen, Lampel & Rietveld, 2013; Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011; Gibson, 2003; Hirsch, 1972; Hracs, 2015; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999; Oakley, 2009; Peterson, 1997; Peterson & Anand, 2004; Peterson & Berger, 1971; Scott, 2012; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009; Zwaan & ter Bogt, 2009; Zwaan et al., 2009). Creative workers and entrepreneurs are usually undercapitalised (Leadbeater, 1999), and, because cultural intermediaries provide producers with necessary forms of capital and support, these intermediaries are able to facilitate the entry of cultural producers into larger markets (Scott, 2012). The concentration of available resources in their hands means the cultural intermediaries are typically in charge of what creative projects get funded and reach the market (Shultz, 2013).

As Shultz argues, cultural intermediaries have a high level of control over what audiences get to see, which suggests a power imbalance exists that pushes cultural producers to cede to the needs of the intermediaries. Accordingly, cultural producers are subject to the tight restrictions imposed on them by big business, such as unrealistic deadlines, tight budgets, and in some cases, the need to find upfront finances and shoulder all the risk in order to pursue their creative vision (Cohen, 2012; Gil & Spiller, 2007). Additionally, creative workers and entrepreneurs are required to “produce the kinds of products that the conglomerates want for their platforms” (Gil & Spiller, 2007, p. 149), which inevitably limits the creative control and capacity of these creative workers, who are left unstimulated and without alternative sources of work. The lack of alternatives is because of the level of competition amongst cultural producers for work, as there is a disproportionate level of jobs to people. Accordingly, those independent producers that do stand out are signed up to long-term contracts, which constrain the producers’ potential to negotiate with other possible distributors (Gil & Spiller, 2007). Creative workers are therefore subordinated to the power and whims of big businesses within the creative industries; in other words, creative workers are hired on a contract basis only when they are needed. This inconsistent demand for work causes creatives to go through phases of “feast and famine” (Leadbeater, 2004, p. 11), or have a “bulimic career” (Pratt, 2000, p. 19), meaning that their working lives are characterised by long, intensive hours of work for concentrated periods, and then having some weeks with little to no work at all.

As a result of these working arrangements, Gill and Pratt (2008) suggest that creative workers epitomise the “precariat”, a hybrid term that combines the words precarity and proletariat, and refers to all types of casual, insecure, flexible employment (p. 3). Existing research indicates that creative workers often have more than one job, that there is a disproportionate number of self-employed or freelance workers in comparison to other industries, and contracts are short-term and project-based (Christopherson, 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Kerr, 2013; Perrons, 2003). Irregular, short-term work is not unusual in the creative industries, and is often the norm for creative workers (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Dex et al., 2000; Gill, 2002, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Kong, 2011; Lee, 2007; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; McRobbie, 2002b, 2007; Neff et al., 2005;

Paterson, 2001). Career uncertainty is also notably prevalent in the music industries (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2010, 2011; Cooper & Wills, 1989; Bennet, 2007; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Sternbach, 1995; van den Eynde et al., 2015; Wills & Cooper, 1987; Zwaan et al., 2009). Regardless of which creative industries creative workers are affiliated with, those identified as forming the precariat share some of the same characteristics, including: diminished control over their work because they are hired to work to the terms of their temporary employer; a “status discord” (Standing, 2011, p. 10), because they possess a multitude of skills, talent and higher education, but are not offered stable employment; and finally, are perceived as “denizens” (Standing, 2011, p. 14), because they have reduced rights and are subordinated to the permanent staff who resent their inclusion in the organisation (Siebert & Wilson, 2013). In other words, although the precariat lifestyle allows for a degree of freedom (a point to be explored more shortly), it is not without its limitations.

An impact of the precarious nature of the working conditions in the creative industries is a notable lack of union and employer support for workers (Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2002a). The unpredictable nature of creative work means that unions would struggle to successfully implement labour regulations (Heery, Conley, Delbridge & Stewart, 2004). Even though it has been recognised that freelancers are probably the type of worker most in need of union support, Saundry, Stuart and Antcliff (2007) suggest that creative workers who are “desperate”, “inexperienced” and willing to build their reputation at all costs would be “unlikely to insist on [union] rates” (p. 182). Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010) also note that union representation is seen as unnecessary or unwelcome due to the individualized nature of creative work. In fact, Siebert and Wilson (2013) found cases where creative people were characterised as unemployable for raising a complaint or pursuing the union's agenda. Furthermore, as Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010) outline, workers are so preoccupied with the day-to-day stresses of uncertain and precarious work in the creative industries that unions are simply not on their “radar” (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, p. 10). Ultimately, then, the scholarship suggests that being affiliated with a union in the creative industries can be a problematic and cumbersome prospect for many creative workers.

A further impact of precarity in the creative industries is the ubiquity of workers working for free or very low pay (Cohen, 2012; Ursell, 2000; McRobbie, 2002b; Willis and Dex, 2003). Ursell (2000) suggests that the lack of union presence in the creative industries makes working for free widespread in project-based work. In her discussion of new television graduates, she found that these workers would often “persist in working for nothing or expenses only, or cash-in-hand, or very low pay” (p. 814), or that young workers would “gift” free labour to production companies, hoping that “their gift will bring career returns in the future” (p. 814). Willis and Dex (2003) echo this, noting that the television industry is over-supplied with “graduates willing to work for free or for very low wages to get a foothold in the industry” (p. 124). Participating in these working conditions in the hope that it will “pay-off” (McRobbie, 2002b, p. 101) inevitably depresses wages and could be construed as cultural intermediaries and big businesses abusing their power to ensure that work is low-paid and increasingly competitive (Cohen, 2012).

Additionally, the irregularity of work in the creative industries has physical and mental impacts for creative workers (Banks, 2007; Ertel, Pech, Ullsperger, von dem Knesebeck & Siegrist, 2005; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; Rowlands, 2009; Umney & Kretsos, 2015; Ursell, 2000; van den Eynde et al., 2015). Workers often work lengthy hours, do not take holidays, and push themselves to physical and mental extremes (Banks, 2007; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; Rowlands, 2009; Ursell, 2000). For instance, it has been documented that the long hours push creatives to experience sleep debt, and in some cases they have been known to fall asleep driving home from work (Wexler, 2006). The pressures of needing to find work and the accompanying financial insecurity lead to higher levels of stress and depression amongst creative people (Ertel et al., 2005; McRobbie, 2002a; Umney & Kretsos, 2015; van den Eynde et al., 2015). As recently as July 2016, the New Zealand Music Commission found that local songwriters, composers and performers were “two and a half times more likely to be diagnosed with depression than the general population” (Matthews, 2016, para. 7). Additionally, van den Eynde et al. (2015) found Australian creative workers in the entertainment industries have a disproportionate rate of mental health problems, and that illicit drug and alcohol use are commonly used amongst workers to help manage the demanding nature of creative work.

Furthermore, workers in the creative industries often sacrifice other parts of their lives for their job, such as the maintenance and development of personal and family relationships (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Rowlands, 2009). Rowlands and Handy (2012) found that film employees tended to form close knit relationships with one another, but if they were to leave the industry, they would be alienated and isolated from those within the industry, and would have to dedicate time to re-establishing relationships with family and friends. The physical and mental tolls of precariat work have perhaps established an unhealthy working environment for many creative people, but creatives nevertheless persevere with the work because of an addiction to it and the drive to pursue creative endeavours (Rowlands & Handy, 2012).

However, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010) suggest this fatalistic view of precarity oversimplifies the worker experience. They indicate that although creative workers bemoan “the mental and emotional states produced” by creative work, they are also “prepared to speak of it as necessary and even desirable” (p. 13). The portfolio career that this project-based nature of creative work creates is seen as advantageous to creative people not only because they can fulfil their intrinsic motivations (explored further in the coming section), but they are able to diversify their skills, dabble in limelight projects (Platman, 2004), extend their networks and validate their creative identities. They also have the opportunity to explore employment outside of purely creative confines. As Umney and Kretsos (2015) found, participants in their study of London jazz musicians “by no means fit the definition of the “precariat”: They undoubtedly experience work precarity, but they have some potential to limit this by turning to other work sources” (p. 17).

Creative workers appear to maintain a balance between more steady, reliable work and more creatively fulfilling work, which can free creatives from the pressures placed on them by cultural intermediaries and allow them greater freedom in their creative pursuits. Pizanias (1992) uses the label “hyphenated artist” to describe what creative workers become when they combine different types of work in this way (as cited in Bain, 2005, p. 40), and Scott (2012) similarly suggests that a “slash-mark” often bisects workers’ identities in the creative industries. Neff et al. (2005) describe how fashion models and new media workers undertake “lower-profile jobs

that pay the bills” in order to also be able to take jobs that have higher levels of “creative cache” (p. 323). Umney and Kretsos (2014) and Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010, 2011) similarly describe how musicians maintain a balance between stable work, such as music tuition, to help subsidise more fulfilling creative work on the side. Yet, the push to find work outside of the creative industries is not without its problems. Bain (2005) argues that visual artists, in particular, prefer jobs that do not require creativity, otherwise these artists feel as if they expend their energy on mundane work that could otherwise be channelled into their own creative projects. So while work outside of the creative industries can be useful for funding creative lifestyles, it appears to need consideration in order to prevent the loss of creative drive.

The acceptance and management of precarity by creative workers could also be interpreted more critically. It could be argued that creative workers accept these conditions because they are using “socially learnt cultural discourses” to make sense of their working lives (Ezzy, 1997, p. 427). Indeed, if the utopian view of the creative industries perpetuated by policymakers and management literature is the dominant discourse available to them (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999/2005; Lee, 2014; McRobbie, 2002a), then it is possible to assume that creative workers who are accepting of insecure working conditions are using this narrow idealistic lens to interpret their own experiences. Furthermore, if creative workers consent to these working conditions, then this helps sustain and strengthen the existence of such conditions. As Huws (2006-7, p. 10) outlines, creative workers construct “new bars for their own cages, or those of others” if they accept irregular and uncertain working circumstances as being the industry norm.

Although precarity may not impact some workers negatively, another critical approach is to consider how irregular work perpetuates divisions based on age, gender and parenthood in the creative workforce (de Peuter & Dyer-Witheford, 2006; Gill, 2007). For example, de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford (2006) have found that, alongside the sexist culture of machismo of the videogame development industry, the long hours and stressful demands of the industry mean that the demographic makeup of workers is skewed towards the young male worker who have no family to support. Gill (2007) outlines a similar scenario in her study of

freelance new media workers, suggesting that the irregularity and insecurity of short-term work is incongruous with child-rearing responsibilities. Additionally, the prevalence of low-paid or unpaid internships in the creative industries also reinforces inequalities along class lines (de Peuter, Cohen & Brophy, 2015; Perlin, 2011; Shade & Jacobson, 2015). Young students and graduates from upper-middle classes have more freedom to intern because they often benefit from more financial support from their family, and as de Peuter, Cohen and Brophy (2015) point out, “those unable to afford to work for free are shut out” from working in the industries (p. 331). Therefore, the precarity of creative work, although having some benefits, can disadvantage creatives who are increasingly exploited by big business and who self-exploit in order to make ends meet.

3.2 Love of work

Another aspect of the nature of creative labour is the level of love and passion that creative workers feel towards their work. Oakley (2007) suggests that the flexible, short-term nature of creative industries projects is part of the pleasure of working in the creative industries, as workers do not feel tied down and they can choose to work on their own schedules. Antcliff (2005) proposes a similar idea, that despite high levels of insecurity and precarity in creative work, it is the flexible nature of the industries that gives workers agency and pleasure over organising their own work. Moreover, literature suggests that creative workers are intrinsically motivated to work in the field that they are passionate about and interested in, and are not driven by extrinsic rewards such as high financial compensation (Amabile, 1993, 1997; Amabile & Mueller, 2007; Bridgstock, 2008; Elsbach, 2009; Gill, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Honey, Heron & Jackson, 1997; Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2007; Oakley, 2009; Throsby, 1994). As Bridgstock (2008) outlines, this internal drive to produce sets creative workers apart from traditional workers, who may be motivated by financial security and career stability. The sentiment that creative workers are distinct from traditional workers is echoed by other research, such as Gill’s (2007) study of new media workers. Gill finds that creative workers have an “extraordinary passion and enthusiasm” for their work, and suggests that “sociologists of work would be hard-pressed to find another group of workers who expressed similar levels of passion both for the work itself and for the field more

generally” (p. 14). Indeed, it is agreed that creative workers across the creative industries achieve a sense of individuality and meaning in their lives through pursuing creative work, and that they find creative fulfilment in their work (Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2007; Caves, 2000). It is through the escape from traditional office work, or what McRobbie (2007) calls “the refusal of mundane work” (para. 9), creative workers derive a level of “pleasure” (Ursell, 2000) and even “freedom” from their work (McRobbie, 2002a, p. 518).

In being intrinsically motivated, creative workers also look to maintain a degree of authenticity. To be authentic is “to be in some sense real and true to something” (Hughes, 2000, p. 190) and entails developing original work, or, alternatively, adhering to genre conventions. For example, quality can be observed when creative workers adhere to strict cognitive boundaries and rules around how to behave appropriately and authentically within their given creative style (Curran, 1996; Elsbach, 2009) or when creatives communicate with and have an impact on an audience (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). To produce high quality authentic work, then, creatives must prioritise intrinsic motivations, craftsmanship and skill over extrinsic desires in order to sell creative products (Bourdieu, 1980, 1993; Gibson, 2014; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Strand, 2014). As Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) suggest, good quality work in the eyes of creative workers cannot be measured by any financial metric. Instead, it can only be assessed by the aesthetic quality of what the workers create, such as the feeling that they are contributing to wider society. Indeed, it is widely accepted in the creative industries that, unlike non-creative industries, those who choose to prioritise commercial success in the creative industries discredit themselves as artists and are labelled as ‘selling-out’ (Bourdieu, 1980; 1993; Gibson, 2014; McRobbie, 1998; Strand, 2014; Taylor & Littleton, 2008; Tienes, 2015). Indeed, this desire to be seen as authentic is often a point of contention between intrinsically-motivated creative workers and more extrinsically-motivated cultural intermediary figures (Bilton, 2007; Negus, 2002).

However, it is identified by Bain (2005) that the understanding of creative workers’ motivations as being purely intrinsic derives from a set of shared myths and stereotypes around the identity of creative workers. She indicates that this belief is driven by a social expectation that creative workers are motivated by “an almost

instinctual desire to create, rather than any monetary incentive" (p. 39), and that this simplifies the realities of creative work. Furthermore, it is proposed by Elsbach and Flynn (2013) that it is too simplistic to suggest creative workers are only motivated by internal desires; in their study of toy workers, they found external factors were also desired by the workers, such as getting feedback from consumers about their work. Hackley and Kover (2007) also found through their study of advertising agency workers that creatives were intrinsically motivated to create, but also were extrinsically motivated and had pragmatic desires of financial security and job stability. More specifically in the music industry, it is suggested by scholarship that the concept of 'selling-out' is starting to become a more acceptable practice, due to the harsh economic realities of working as a musician (Gloor, 2008; Hopper, 2013; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Klein et al. 2016). In other words, although creative workers tend towards "getting high" and "getting free" (intrinsic motivations) they are not averse to traditional career orientations of "getting balanced, getting ahead and getting secure" (Derr, 1986, as cited in Bridgstock, 2005, p. 2).

Additionally, some scholars suggest that intrinsic rewards are what drive workers to accept exploitative, precarious and low-paid working conditions as the norm, and that this is what causes a significant oversupply of creative workers and a competitive working environment (Antcliff, 2005; Caves, 2000; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2002a; Neff et al., 2005; Oakley, 2009; Stahl, 2006; Ursell, 2000). Ursell (2000) found that television workers in London accepted low-paid work for the pleasure it gave them, and that if they really wanted to work for money, then they would "work in a bank" instead (p. 819). Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010) similarly suggest that the pleasure creative workers receive from creative work drives them to exploit themselves, by taking on too much and working excessive hours. Rowlands and Handy (2012) describe how the creative pleasures workers get from film production work is what causes them to be addicted to work; the workers become so consumed by their jobs that they plan their lives around their "addictions" (p. 661). Eikhof and Haunschild (2006) propose a similar notion, finding in their study of the working lives of theatre actors that the love the actors felt for their work meant they subordinated their private lives to their working lives in a number of ways. For example, some described how they would only purchase easily transportable furniture, and others described how

having a romantic relationship outside of the theatre community was a rare occurrence. Although it has been suggested thus far that a number of labour conditions that creative workers are subject to stem from the dominance of cultural intermediaries, it appears that self-exploitation and intrinsic desires also influence the lived experiences of creative people (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011).

3.3 Creative workers as entrepreneurs

A third aspect of the nature of creative labour is that of the entrepreneurial requirements of creative workers. As Lingo and Tepper (2013) suggest, one important way in which creative workers manage uncertainty in the creative industries is through acting as cultural entrepreneurs. A cultural entrepreneur can be defined as an individual who embodies entrepreneurial characteristics, such as the willingness to take risk and flexibility, and who also creates new and novel products in the cultural sphere (Swedberg, 2006). Unlike a traditional entrepreneur, cultural entrepreneurs are not primarily driven by the desire to make money; instead, they balance their intrinsically-motivated creative aspirations with the requirement to earn a living in a capitalist economy (Banks, 2007; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Scott, 2012). De Bruin (2005) also suggests creative entrepreneurs are distinct from artists, in that artists are people who create a piece of work, and creative entrepreneurs are capable of commercialising and marketing the work.

As stated before, creative workers accept the high risk of creative work in order to reap the benefits of undertaking creative and autonomous work. This fits in with a wider neoliberal trend of the 'new spirit of capitalism' (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999/2005), in which freedom, autonomy and individualism are seen as the ideal, driving forces. Creative workers are characterised as epitomising this new spirit: "they are anti-establishment, anti-traditionalist and in respects highly individualistic: they prize freedom, autonomy and choice. These values predispose them to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurship in a spirit of self-exploration and self-fulfilment" (Leadbeater & Oakley 1999, p. 15). Creative workers are therefore driving this new, talent-led, individualistic meritocracy; they are told by the utopian creative industries rhetoric that anyone can achieve success if they just try (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; McRobbie, 2002b). As a result of this, the

individual creative worker undergoes a process of commodifying themselves (du Gay, 1996; McRobbie, 2002a). Individuals are expected to invest in the self; there is a “constant pressure” for creative workers to “self-improve” by the honing of a wide range of different skills (Neff et al., 2005, p. 320), and creative workers need to have both business and artistic adroitness (Bilton, 2010; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Ellmeier, 2003; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2009; Neff et al., 2005; Ryan & Hearn, 2010; Scott, 2012). Furthermore, creative workers are encouraged to be intensely self-promotional and successfully market themselves if they want to progress in their chosen creative field (Davidson, 2004; Forster, 1993; Hadden, 1998; McRobbie, 2002a). It is suggested, then, that it is crucial for creative entrepreneurs to be able to manage and organise the administrative aspects of their working lives themselves, because this is what sets them apart from regular creative workers or artists (Bilton, 2010; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Ryan & Hearn, 2010).

What allows cultural entrepreneurs to succeed at being multi-skilled creative workers is the presence and capabilities of digital technology (Ryan & Hearn, 2010; Scott, 2012; Thomson, 2013; Young & Collins, 2010). Online social media platforms are crucial tools for self-promotion and marketing due to their two-way, direct nature (Sarabdeen, 2014), which therefore gives creative workers the opportunity to interact and engage with audiences in a more authentic, intimate way (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Morris, 2014). Furthermore, the development of digital technology and software now allows for a wider range of creative entrepreneurs to create, promote and distribute their work online themselves, without having to go through traditional gatekeepers (Thomson, 2013; Young & Collins, 2010). Scott (2012, p. 238) proposes it is this “DIY” nature of the creative industries that allows cultural entrepreneurs, who lack economic capital, to accumulate alternative capitals; for example, they may be able to generate symbolic capital through the online exposure of their work to audiences, which manifests in quantifiable metrics of engagement, such as page views or download numbers. The generation of this alternative capital can then be converted into cultural intermediary interest, in the form of what Scott (2012) describes as “buzz”, which is “the infectious power of rumours and recommendations circulating through dense cultural intermediary networks” (p. 244). Even though digital technology has radically changed the role of cultural intermediaries in the creative industries,

particularly in the music industry (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Morris, 2014; Young & Collins, 2010), they nevertheless continue to play a crucial role in the space between audience and cultural producer (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011; Gibson, 2003; Hirsch, 1972; Peterson, 1997; Peterson & Anand, 2004; Peterson & Berger, 1971; Scott, 2012; Zwaan & ter Bogt, 2009; Zwaan et al., 2009). Scott (2012) indicates this is because cultural intermediaries can provide financially-poor cultural entrepreneurs with necessary forms of capital and support, which therefore makes the construction and presence of 'buzz' crucial for these entrepreneurs.

However, it is suggested that such a great emphasis on entrepreneurialism can have a negative impact on creative work, as it creates a strongly individualised working culture (Banks, 2007; Gill & Pratt, 2008; McGuigan, 2010; Neff et al., 2005; Umney & Kretsos, 2014). Umney and Kretsos (2014) discuss how such emphasis on individual entrepreneurialism and autonomy act as a barrier to professional solidarity, which therefore weakens the potential for the negotiation of precarious working conditions. Like business-owners, creative workers must bear "more explicit, individualised, profit-oriented risk" themselves (Neff et al., 2005, p. 310). If things go wrong, then creative workers only have themselves and their personal failings to blame, as it was their decision to undertake the precarious, high-risk creative work in the first place (Banks, 2007; Beck, 1986/1992; Gill & Pratt, 2008; McGuigan, 2010; McRobbie, 2002a). McRobbie (2002a) suggests that this individualisation of risk directly serves the interests of the new, creative economy, as capitalism is able to "absolve itself of responsibility by creating invisible structures" and therefore ensure "the absence of social critique" (p. 521). Indeed, the individualisation of risk fits in with the broader desires of policymakers, both in New Zealand and abroad, to ensure that all members of society are self-reliant, individualised economic agents with market-earning potential and are poised to engage as productively as possible in the creative economy (Scott & Craig, 2012).

Furthermore, another challenge associated with entrepreneurialism in the creative industries is that this mode of work does not work successfully for everyone, and is often difficult to maintain (Leadbeater, 2004; Menger, 1999). As Leadbeater (2004) suggests, under-capitalised, under-managed creative workers get by with "improvisational entrepreneurship, by the seat of their pants" (p. 32) and often find

it difficult to survive long-term in the marketplace. Additionally, long-term success in the marketplace is difficult, because operating successfully as a self-sufficient cultural entrepreneur is a challenging when there is uncertain demand for the creative products developed by creative entrepreneurs (Bilton, 2007; Caves, 2000). As Caves (2000) outlines, creative products are by their nature symbolic goods and their success can only be evaluated at the point of consumption. Therefore, uncertain demand, coupled with undercapitalisation and under-management, mean that the majority of creative businesses remain in the initial gestation phase of growth (Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999).

Additionally, Menger (1999) notes that although creative workers may seem to reap the benefits of being creative entrepreneurs, such as independence and autonomy, he suggests that this may only be “illusory” if they fail to break into the “inner circles” of successful creative workers (p. 552). Indeed, this exclusive nature of securing work in the creative industries has been noted by others; network-based structures of creative industries work are often tight-knit, exclusive, and hard to break into (Christopherson, 2008; Rowlands & Handy, 2012). The benefits of being an entrepreneurial free-agent are therefore not necessarily always guaranteed for workers in the creative industries.

3.4 Importance of networks

A fourth aspect of the nature of labour conditions in the creative industries is the importance of the network. In Granovetter's (1973) discussion about the “strength of weak ties”, he suggests that loose social connections are valuable in securing work in a labour market, and can be more effective than traditional recruitment practices, such as agencies or advertisements. This idea is particularly relevant in the creative industries, considering the precarious nature of work as described above. Blair (2001, 2009) and Blair, Grey and Randle (2001) recognise the importance of social networks and informal contacts in the United Kingdom film industry, suggesting that film workers consciously engage in developing this network in order to benefit from potential employment opportunities. Networking practices, such as the “regular social ritual” of drinking with other workers in the industry (Nixon & Crewe, 2004, p. 139), and “schmoozing” in a social setting are also

recognised as being compulsory in order to secure work in the creative industries (Banks, 2007; Murdock, 2003; Neff et al., 2005; Power & Scott, 2004).

In many respects, the reliance on the network in the creative industries adheres to Wittel's (2001) concept of network sociality. Wittel describes this concept in contrast to durable relationships in a stable community; network sociality is instead characterised by ephemeral, fleeting, informational encounters, which are instrumental in finding work in the creative industries. However, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010, 2011) point out that not all relationships in the creative industries are characterised by fleeting, weak ties. They suggest that precarious working conditions of creative work actually can result in friendship, as it can help creative workers cope with the conditions. Coulson (2012) suggests that strategic and calculated practices of networking were not present in the research she did of English musicians, suggesting instead that networks were more "ad hoc" due to the "kaleidoscopic" and varied nature of the musicians' working lives (p. 255). Moreover, she asserts that the "more diverse, less hierarchical" (p. 255) qualities of the music industry itself, in comparison to other creative industries, was what accounted for the absence of instrumental relationships present in the industry.

However, the centrality of networking to secure work in the creative industries has been criticised for a number of reasons. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010, 2011) raise the notion that the compulsory nature of networking in the creative industries puts a lot of pressure on creative workers who are not disposed to the intensely social atmosphere they are required to participate in. Davenport (2006) also suggests that the great importance of creative workers' reputations within a professional network means that they are less open to risk and experimentation with their work. Accordingly, creative workers tend to band together forming closed networks of people who produce standardised creative work. The development of these closed networks then, produces what Bilton (2007) refers to as over-familiarisation and over-specialisation, where creative people fall into roles and regular patterns of work that maintain their core competencies and limit creativity.

Furthermore, issues of inequality can also be raised in regards to the importance of networks in creative work (Banks, 2007; Blair, 2001; Christopherson & Storper, 1989;

Coulson, 2012; Umney & Kretsos, 2015). Newcomers to creative work who do not have access to a network, be it a friend or family member in their desired field, are clearly disadvantaged (Blair, 2001). Issues of protectionism, nepotism and exclusion are therefore rampant in network-based hiring practices (Banks, 2007). The dependence of workers on social networks also directly undermines the idea that the creative industries operate as a meritocracy. Christopherson and Storper (1989) note that it is the “core” workers of the UK film industry who are disproportionately given work, as the industry tends to favour “workers with extensive work experience and a network of personal connections” (p. 339). Indeed, access to creative work largely depends on wider social structures, such as the creative worker’s economic, education and family background (Coulson, 2012; Umney & Kretsos, 2015).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined various theoretical perspectives in regards to the nature of work in the creative industries. The flexible and unstructured conditions of creative labour have been celebrated for the autonomy and freedom they give to creative workers. However, when considering the actual lived experiences of creative workers, these conditions can be reframed in a more critical light. The literature above is limited by the fractured and diverse ways in which lived experiences of workers within the creative industries have been examined, therefore it is difficult to make any broad conclusions about creative labour conditions. However, notable themes start to emerge when considering the literature as a whole, such as that of precarious working conditions, the love creative workers feel towards their work, the compulsory entrepreneurialism of creative work, and the importance of social networks for creative workers.

Chapter 4

Methodology & Method

Introduction

This research aims to explore the conditions and the subjective experiences of three musicians working in the New Zealand music industry, and to obtain a deeper understanding of the challenges workers may face. A qualitative research design has been chosen to help achieve my research objective, as this approach offers researchers a way to build a picture of individual, subjective experiences about social phenomena (Leavy, 2014). My research design is guided by an interpretivist philosophical approach, which allows me to explore how the research participants construct individual meaning around their experiences in the music industry (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Data will be collected through one-on-one responsive interviews with research participants, who will all be asked open-ended questions about aspects of their working lives in the music industry (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The data set will then be analysed and interpreted using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis methodology, which allows the researcher to explore common themes present throughout the data that build a response to the research question.

4.1 Approach to the research

This research is intended to answer the question *what are the experiences of New Zealand musicians regarding the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry?* To answer my research question, the purpose of my research will be to explore the social realities that music industry workers experience and to build an understanding about what these experiences mean to them. A qualitative research design is more suited to this research intention, as quantitative methods assume the social world exists as a concrete form that can be measured objectively; they do not

account for the way in which social actors actively construct meaning about phenomena themselves (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). A qualitative approach, then, offers a way to understand individual interpretations of phenomena, as it is an effective way of “building knowledge about the social world and human experience” (Leavy, 2014, p. 1) and focuses on the way social actors ascribe meaning to different situations, objects or activities (Leavy, 2014; Robson, 2011). Consequently, qualitative approaches help to attain ‘thick descriptions’ of social phenomena, which are detailed, nuanced accounts of aspects of the social world (Geertz, 1973). Furthermore, Robson (2011) argues that qualitative analysis allows researchers an opportunity to understand how meaning and knowledge is socially constructed by individuals, and in my case, could lead to the gaining of multiple perspectives and understandings of how the music industry operates.

In pursuing qualitative analysis, I also adopted an interpretivist philosophical approach (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). An interpretivist philosophical approach holds that there is no single, objective reality; instead, reality is perceived, and individuals create categories and theories to try to make sense of the world around them. Moreover, multiple, shared realities can exist, as “all human knowledge is developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 3). An interpretivist approach therefore helps the researcher understand how musicians construct meaning around their experiences in the music industry, and contributes to building a ‘thick description’ in response to the research question.

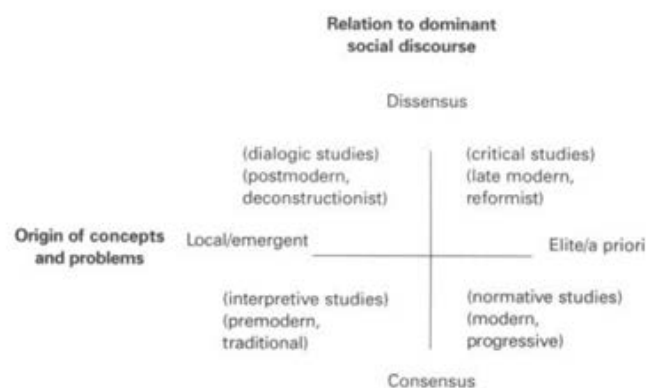


Figure 4.1 Deetz's (1996 as cited in Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 24) contrasting dimensions from the metatheory of representational practices.

With reference to Deetz's (1996) model (see figure 4.1), which conceptualises where a researcher's position sits along a "local/emergent - elite a priori" x axis and a "consensus - dissensus" y axis, my research position would fit firmly in the middle of both axes. Although the research findings I am expecting to produce will be based around insights rather than a concrete truth, which is in line with the local/emergent side of the x axis, my research is nevertheless theory-driven, and will be written-up within my own language system, which are elements that adhere to an elite/ a priori position (Deetz, 1996). Moreover, Deetz suggests that research positions can sit in line with consensus or dissensus; the goal with research that falls under the consensus pole seeks to uncritically reflect on existing social orders, whereas research within the dissensus dimension intends to critique and challenge structures of power. My research position fits firmly in the middle of these two poles, as it is not actively attempting to take a distinctly critical approach to interpreting the data, however, my analysis will be connected to critical theory when appropriate.

From this interpretivist perspective, my primary goal as a researcher is to understand the behaviour and experiences of the music industry workers, not to predict what they say (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). This research will be a flexible, ongoing process of understanding between the researcher and the musicians; it is accepted there is no one fixed understanding for me to take away from the research and that findings cannot be generalised (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, as a researcher it is important that I am aware of how meaning from the interview will be "constructed locally", and that the interview is a process where the interviewer is involved as a "co-constructor", rather than simply an observer (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 288). I am essentially part of the participant's social reality, and it is accepted that a "privileged, Archimedian vantage point" from which I can objectively observe the research participant does not exist (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 512). Nevertheless, I will try to let the participants of my research use their own perspectives and frames of reference and not my own, because if they "can direct the conversation to matters that they know about and that they think are important, the interviews are likely to be of a higher quality" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 15).

It is suggested that an important part of the interpretivist tradition is *verstehen*, which is a type of prerequisite base of knowledge necessary for the researcher to have in order to understand particular meanings and interpretations of the experiences being researched (Outhwaite, 1975, as cited in Duberly, Johnson & Cassell, 2012). I believe I have a base level of *verstehen*, as I have studied the nature of the creative industries for three years, and have looked at the state of the music industry in New Zealand for a cultural policy assignment in my final year of completing the Bachelor of Communication Studies at AUT. Additionally, my understanding of creative labour has been refined through my review of the available literature. However, in order to further achieve *verstehen*, I believe I will need to undertake additional background research into each of my participants prior to the interview, so that I am able to understand their location within the context of the New Zealand music industry more deeply. This will help me access and understand “the actual meanings and interpretations actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena” (Duberly et al., 2012, p. 21), and will therefore inform how I will write about the experiences they have within the New Zealand music industry.

4.2 Data gathering - interviews

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest that responsive interviewing is an effective approach to qualitative research because it can help a researcher understand others' experiences of the world. The responsive interview approach emphasises how “qualitative interviewing is a dynamic and iterative process” (p. 15), and that every interview is a unique conversation between the researcher and the participant. Interviewees in a qualitative interview are ‘conversational partners’, rather than subjects to be observed by the researcher. Rubin and Rubin (2005) indicate this term emphasises the active role the research participant has in directing and shaping the conversation, and also suggests that the interview is a co-operative encounter between the researcher and the participant. The acknowledgement of this relationship fits with the epistemological approach to the research, as it accounts for how reality does not exist in a concrete way for the researcher to view objectively; instead, the researcher and the participant are both actively constructing meaning together (Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

Responsive interviews are typically semi-structured, which, as opposed to structured interviews, allow for more flexibility within the discussion that will take place with the participants. Unlike the use of standardised questioning and its limitations in providing information beyond what is in the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to be able to openly follow-up on particular angles with participants that could be more relevant to the research question (Brinkmann, 2014). These types of interviews are also more beneficial to this research than unstructured interviews, as the researcher is able to “gently guide” a discussion about the research topic with the participant, and ask more focused questions about particular ideas and subjects (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 4). Participants will be asked open-ended questions about broad topics regarding the conditions and their experiences of the New Zealand music industry, rather than set questions, in order to enable the discussion to operate as a “conversational encounter” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 72). The semi-structured interview will be audio-taped for later transcription and analysis, and will be conducted with the aim of “obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 3).

A researcher interviewing from an interpretivist perspective needs to be aware there may be multiple interpretations that can be taken from the interview, and ‘meanings’ that arise from the interview may be contradictory. The researcher therefore needs to be open to these multiple interpretations, and not just try look for “the voice of the interviewee” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 388). Additionally, the quality of data gathered through semi-structured interviews may depend on interviewer’s skills, for example the ability to ask good questions throughout the interview. As such, the researcher is required to be as prepared as possible for the interview by conducting thorough background research on the participant. These participants will be chosen not at random, but through purposeful selection (Ryan & Bernard, 2000), where my own judgments and connections will be used as a means of determining interview subjects. These participants will include members of more than one gender, a range of ages, and from within a range of musical genres, in order to get a diverse range of responses and perspectives. Musicians must have also received some degree of support from New Zealand On Air for a project, such as promotional or financial support, as this will help the researcher

explore the impact government policy schemes might have over the musicians' experiences of the labour conditions in the industry.

4.3 Research method - thematic analysis

The method that will be used to conduct this research will be that of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an effective research method that identifies, analyses and reports themes or patterns present within a data set, and which can generate further understanding about a phenomenon for a researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke's guidelines for conducting thematic analysis will be the main framework that will be followed, but Boyatzis (1998) and Ryan and Bernard (2000; 2003) will also be referred to for supplementary detail regarding sampling, research design, theme and code development, and analysis.

An advantage of a qualitative method such as thematic analysis is that it is an effective approach for understanding the subjective lived experiences of human beings (Leavy, 2014). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest thematic analysis is a flexible research method that can be used effectively with a range of theoretical approaches, as it is not dependent on theory and epistemology like other methods, such as conversation analysis or phenomenology. Thematic analysis also has freedom and flexibility in regards to how it can be applied to a wide range of data sets, where most types of information are able to be considered for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, the flexibility of thematic analysis enables the researcher to generate new codes from the data that have not previously been considered in existing research (Saldana, 2009). Thematic analysis is also a useful method when it comes to processing and analysing large and detailed data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method that produces insights that can be broadly understood by a wide audience (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is important for this research because it makes the research findings accessible to key stakeholders in the New Zealand music industry who may have influence over the state of the industry's working conditions, such as policymakers.

4.3.1 Thematic analysis stipulations

Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clarke (2006) and Ryan and Bernard (2000, 2003) all suggest that a number of stipulations need to be addressed before conducting the analysis of the data, as these decisions will influence the way in which the data is interpreted. These stipulations include the unit of analysis, whether the research will be theory or inductively driven, and whether the researcher will be looking at latent or manifest themes present in the data.

The unit of analysis in this research will be what Ryan and Bernard (2000) describe as a thematic unit, which is “chunks of text that represent a theme” (p. 780). In other words, phrases describing recurring ideas present in the data will be the units of analysis in this research. A theme can be defined as an abstract construct that links together expressions present in texts, images, sounds and objects (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). These expressions will be henceforth referred to as codes, as Braun and Clarke (2006) describe them, for purposes of clarity and consistency. These codes can both be informed inductively by the data itself, and by the researcher’s prior theoretical knowledge about the phenomena being explored (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In this case, the analysis will predominantly be theoretically-driven, due to the researcher’s knowledge of similar studies. However, codes that fall outside of this prior knowledge will also be considered. These codes can be used to identify both the semantic themes in the data, which are the explicitly visible aspects or surface meanings of a phenomenon, as well as the latent themes, which are the underlying ideas and assumptions behind the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Boyatzis (1998) suggests that identifying both types of themes are effective at procuring insights. However, this research will mostly be focusing on the latent themes present in the data, because this is the most appropriate for research from an interpretivist perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Braun and Clarke suggest, the examination of latent themes helps the researcher to go beyond the surface level of the data set and in my case, allows for the unpacking and interpreting of underlying meanings behind how the research participants describe their experiences in the music industry.

4.3.2 How the data will be analysed

As indicated above, the data will be analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. Throughout this analysis, the researcher will refer to the 'Checklist for Good Thematic Analysis' that Braun and Clarke provide, in order to ensure that each step has been done adequately. A summary of the six phases that the researcher will need to take are as follows.

Firstly, they suggest that it is important for the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data. This requires the researcher to transcribe the data if it is verbal, which, although time-consuming, is a means for becoming familiar with the data. There is no one specific way to transcribe this data, however, they suggest that it is key that it is a "verbatim account of all verbal (and sometimes non-verbal [e.g. coughs]) utterances" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 17). They also suggest to read and re-read the data multiple times. Both of these activities will help the researcher to develop an initial understanding of the data, and will also trigger ideas regarding later stages of the thematic analysis.

The second phase of Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework requires the researcher to generate initial codes from the data. Written notes or coloured highlighting onto the transcript of the data is a way to generate code ideas. This can then effectively be migrated onto a spreadsheet, where it can be refined more tidily with extracts in one column, and initial codes in another column. As discussed earlier, these codes are the expression of a certain feature of the data that relates to the research question, and are "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the entire data set needs to be examined systematically, and coding for as many patterns as possible is the best approach to take, so that nothing gets missed.

The third phase of thematic analysis is searching for themes. This phase requires the researcher to zoom out and adopt a holistic focus in order to group the codes into possible overarching themes and sub-themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest visual representations, such as tables and mind-maps, might be useful in this phase, as it will help the researcher to sort the codes into broader themes. Codes can fit into

multiple themes, and some may not fit into any theme, but during this phase none should be discarded.

The next phase is that of reviewing themes. This requires the researcher to refine their themes - some themes might overlap, and thus can be collapsed into one; other themes and codes may be too diverse and might not be relevant to the research question at hand. At this stage, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the researcher reviews all of the codes within a theme to ensure that they “appear to form a coherent pattern” (p. 20), and to rework the theme if it does not. Braun and Clarke also suggest that the researcher considers the relevance of each theme to the data set as a whole, and if they accurately represent the data in relation to the research question. This review of the themes will refine the thematic map produced in the third phase. Braun and Clarke also suggest that a re-reading of the whole data set is necessary during this phase, in order to pick up on potential codes that may have been missed during the initial coding.

Once a final thematic map has been developed, the next phase is then to define and name the themes. This can be done by pinpointing the “essence” of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 22), and recognising what theme is illustrated by the phenomena being studied. During this phase, the researcher needs to carry-out a detailed written analysis for each theme, and should identify the “story” the theme tells (p. 22), as well as how each theme fits into a broader narrative of the data set. Sub-themes may also be identified during this phase, which may be helpful in adding structure and clarity to complex themes.

The final phase is that of writing the report. In this final phase, the researcher needs to write-up the analysis they have carried out in the form of a thesis, and to effectively communicate to the reader the complex story present within the data that answers the research question. This write-up must provide the reader with pieces of evidence from the data, which effectively illustrate the essence of that particular theme. It must give a “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story” (p. 23) that the data tells, and also must make a strong, analytical argument in response to the research question.

4.4 Research methodology drawbacks

One challenge of qualitative research in general is that, due to its time-consuming nature, sample sizes are quite small and it is difficult for the researcher to make broad generalisations about a phenomenon (Mason, 2002). Moreover, due to the multiplicity of variables in the phenomenon that is being examined, systematic comparisons are difficult to make. Challenges associated with qualitative research are hard to overcome, as they are inherent to the nature of this type of research (Fairclough, 1992). The best way for the researcher to address such challenges is to be aware of them (Schegloff, 1997), and to accept that the research will provide a snapshot of New Zealand music workers' subjective experiences of labour, rather than a holistic, all-encompassing overview of the phenomenon.

A disadvantage associated with thematic analysis is that of the risk of projection; that is, the risk of the researcher projecting their values, emotions and attitudes onto a research participant (Boyatzis, 1998). This can be a risk, particularly if the researcher is very familiar with the phenomenon being studied, as therefore they may feel tempted to sometimes "fill in the blanks" (p. 13). In order to prevent or lessen this risk, Boyatzis suggests a number of measures, including that of establishing a consistent and reliable coding method, using multiple people to encode the information, and also trying to stay as close as possible to the raw data when developing codes and overarching themes.

Another disadvantage that Boyatzis (1998) recognises with thematic analysis is that of the effect of the researcher's mood and style. Exhaustion and stress felt by researchers can impact upon their interpretation of the data. Their "cognitive style, tendency toward wanting a clear, definite, correct answer" (p. 15) may also impact upon the consistent coding and analysis of the data, because sometimes the complex and ambiguous nature of the data can be frustrating to the researcher. Obviously, being well-rested will be one effective way to combat this downfall. Maintaining "tolerance to ambiguity" and having "patient perseverance" (p. 15) are also strategies that Boyatzis suggests in order to lessen the impact of the researcher's mood and style upon the research process.

Braun and Clarke (2009) also identify a disadvantage of thematic analysis. They suggest that although the flexibility of the method is an advantage in the way that it allows the analysis to be conducted from a multiplicity of approaches, it can also mean that there is no one clear, specific path of thematic analysis to guide the researcher. This can potentially make the process overwhelming and “paralysing” (p. 27) for the researcher, as they may not know where to begin with the data, particularly as it is word-based rather than number-based. The most effective way to overcome this downfall is to make sure that each of Braun and Clarke’s phases are carried out properly and thoroughly, referring to their ‘Checklist for Good Thematic Analysis’ throughout the entire process. In times of confusion, reaching out to one’s supervisor for clarification and help would also be an appropriate tactic to avoid ‘paralysis’.

4.5 Method

My research began with my initial desire to pursue a question in the area of creative labour, as this was a subject that had interested me in my undergraduate studies at AUT. I wanted to learn more about the experiences of creative workers in a New Zealand context, and also how this fit into the wider realm of work in contemporary society. I discussed with my supervisor my initial ideas, and we chose to narrow my focus to looking at the experiences of musicians working in the New Zealand music industry because there had been little scholarship written in this subject area, and I also feel that I have personal connections to this industry. I began my initial research into the area, looking at scholarship about creative labour more generally, as well as considering what research had been done about the New Zealand music industry by government bodies such as New Zealand On Air and The New Zealand Music Commission. After this initial research, I realised that these government bodies had no published research that considered the individual experiences of local musicians; instead the focus was on quantifiable metrics of success, such as record sales and airplay of local music. This helped me further narrow my research focus and develop my research question, as it appeared more research was needed that considered individual experiences of the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry.

Further consultation with my supervisor led to the decision that the best way to explore individual subjective experiences of the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry was to conduct qualitative interviews with three musicians working in the industry. This approach would enable me to gather a large amount of complex data from these musicians, whilst at the same time not overload myself beyond what was expected for a master's thesis. It was also decided at this point that the best method of analysis was Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, because this was a clear, flexible approach to analysing qualitative information.

After completing the front end of my thesis, I applied for ethics approval so that I could begin gathering my data. As part of the ethics application process, I consulted an industry insider about the direction of my research, and he recommended someone for me to contact as a possible person to interview. Once my research was accepted by the ethics committee, I reached out to the suggested musician, and I also contacted two other musicians who I knew of in my personal life before the research began. I set up interviews with each of these musicians over the course of several months, two of which were in person, and the other was over the phone.

Once I had gathered my data, I began the transcription process. I used a programme called InqScribe for this step, which allowed me to slow down the taped audio of the interviews. After an initial transcription of each of the interviews, I re-listened to the audio to double-check everything in my script was correct. I then sent the scripts to each research participant for approval, and to see if they had any added ideas, comments or clarifications they wished to make before I began my data analysis.

With the completed signed-off transcripts, I then re-read each of the interviews multiple times to familiarise myself with the data. During this process, I highlighted and wrote notes on the margins of each interviews with initial ideas thoughts about the interviews and identified codes that appeared to recur in the data. I then put these initial codes into a large spreadsheet, putting a description in a cell next to the code titles so that my identified coding scheme was reliable and could be used by another researcher. Once I had these codes established with definitions, I began to group the codes from the spreadsheet into a large mind-map with arrows that

connected related codes to each other. I grouped the codes in several different ways, refining and removing codes that were less relevant to my research question, and gradually assigning each group of codes with theme titles. I consulted my supervisor about my grouping ideas, and we settled on five dominant themes that were present in the data and appeared to answer my research question.

After I had chosen these five themes, I began to write up my analysis for each theme. I connected examples from the data with theory in order to effectively tell each theme's narrative and to questions the significance of the findings. My data analysis chapter became an explanation of the findings, but also began the 'zooming' out process that would be followed up in my final discussion chapter. Therefore, as I was conducting my analysis, I made notes about how themes related to each other and how the experiences of the musicians fit into the broader context of contemporary work. This then became the basis of my last discussion chapter. After completing several drafts, I completed my thesis.

Chapter 5

Data analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the conditions and subjective experiences of three musicians working in the New Zealand music industry, and to obtain an account of the challenges these workers may face. Data has been gathered through qualitative, one-on-one interviews with three New Zealand musicians: Antony, a solo artist in Mount Maunganui and former member of the duo Pleaseplease; Emma, a member of the band Decades and based in Christchurch; and Brad, a member of the band Two Cartoons and based in Auckland. In order to analyse the collected data, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis has been employed. This qualitative approach to collecting and analysing the data has allowed the researcher to identify relevant thematic patterns in a rich, descriptive data set, which helps to understand the individual, nuanced experiences of each musician working in the industry. Five overarching themes have been found to be present in the data: the feeling that the New Zealand music industry is small; the uncertain nature of working in the industry; the importance of authenticity; cultural entrepreneurialism; and cultural intermediaries. As I have already mentioned, this chapter not only presents the findings of the interviews, but begins the discussion of their significance in understanding the conditions experienced by three New Zealand musicians.

5.1 Small New Zealand scene

A significant theme that comes out of the data is the sense amongst the musicians that the New Zealand music scene feels small. The smallness of the scene has both positive and negative aspects for each of the musicians, such as how it facilitates a

tight-knit community, but only gives them a limited number of opportunities. Straw (1997, p. 494, as cited in Mitchell, 1997, p. 83) defines a music scene as “that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilisation”. This theme therefore considers the music scene in terms of the wider music industry community and marketplace that exists in New Zealand across all genres, and includes both music industry workers and music fan communities.

One positive aspect of the smallness of New Zealand’s music scene that the musicians describe is how it facilitates a tight-knit, supportive musician community that is willing to collaborate and help each other out. As Scott (2012) suggests, musicians offering other musicians help or favours is a common feature of the music industry, and this helps build relationships in the community. However, Scott (2012, p. 246) also notes that these favours are not just done for the value of developing relationships; he argues that there is an aspect of how these favours essentially “construct field-specific symbolic capital, which is then attached to the self through objects” for musicians. In other words, by collaborating with and helping out others in the music industry, musicians are able to accumulate prestige and develop a favourable reputation within the industry themselves. This has significance in terms of how it helps the livelihoods of musicians, as the accumulation of such capital has the potential of conversion into long term economic profits (Bourdieu, 1996). This process of capital conversion is not explicitly mentioned in the data, however, it appears to be implied in some cases. For example, Emma mentions that her band started to have more success after they found “way more influential and talented people” to work with, amongst other factors.

However, the attainment of symbolic capital through collaborative music work does not necessarily mean the musicians’ relationships in the industry have been developed purely for instrumental and profit-related reasons. Instead, the musicians highlight how supportive and genuine the musician community feels in New Zealand. As Emma states:

“We're all mates, and we're all from all different genres, and we're all doing different things, and we all see each other around town all the time at events and... it is a real sense of community, and even if you don't, you know, personally hang out with any of these people on a private basis, it's this community when you're out and about and you're supporting each other.”

Furthermore, it is mentioned that the community does not feel competitive or exclusive, with Brad comparing the scene to the one in the UK, which is “every man for himself in a lot of ways, it wasn't like this sense of community and scene that there is here”. This sense of a small musician community with supportive and authentic relationships therefore challenges Wittel's (2001) concept of 'network sociality' in the cultural economy, which posits the idea that relationships in this sector are characterised by instrumental, ephemeral and fleeting relationships intended to further workers' economic interests.

Although the relationships that the musicians discuss in the data cannot be distilled down to being purely instrumental and calculated in nature, it is perhaps overly optimistic to suggest that the community the musicians discuss reflects Florida's (2002) or Scott's (2000) utopian conceptions of creative clusters. As Banks (2007) proposes, such accounts of creative communities overlook dysfunctionalities of clusters and networks, and falsely assume that such networks are “intrinsically inclusive and egalitarian” (p. 137). Dysfunctionalities certainly exist in New Zealand's small, tight-knit musician community. For example, Brad mentions how the small nature of the musician community means that everyone is in everyone else's “business”, and “certain people... bicker and bitch behind your back”. Emma also mentions how when she was first starting out in the industry and was yet to have success with her band's music, there was a bitter feeling of being “left out of the club”, which highlights the validity of research that suggests there are levels of exclusivity that pose barriers to new creative workers starting out in a field (Banks, 2007; Blair, 2001). The data therefore suggests a more nuanced understanding of relationships in the creative industries, which falls between network sociality and creative clusters. It appears to support the research completed by Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010, 2011), who suggest the uncertain nature of the creative industries result in strong, authentic relationships, as workers support each other in order to cope with the insecure and difficult conditions of creative work.

A challenge associated with the small nature of the New Zealand music scene is how some of the musicians feel there is limited opportunity in New Zealand compared to overseas markets. They feel that there is more scope to be working as a musician in places like Europe or the United States than there is in New Zealand. This feeling is somewhat unsurprising when considering the consistently small scale of New Zealand's music market (New Zealand Music Commission, 2014; Recording Industry Association of America, n.d.) and the country's geographic isolation (Homan, Cloonan & Cattermole, 2015). The limits of this isolation are noted in the data by Antony, who compares touring at home to touring overseas in the United States:

“I could probably spend two weeks travelling both islands [in New Zealand] and then I'd have to give it another twelve months before I could do that again, you know? And... even in doing that, it doesn't really bear that much fruit.... But... in a country like the States, you could tour non-stop... you could play every night of the year and you could just keep going.”

However, Brad has quite a different perspective on overseas markets in comparison with New Zealand. After living in the United Kingdom for a year, he says that he feels that the scene over there is setup to cater more towards already established bands, as all the main bar venues are controlled by demanding promoters. For this reason, he feels the small nature of New Zealand's music scene makes the country a more ideal place for growing bands and artists who are starting out.

Furthermore, another negative impact of the New Zealand music scene's sense of smallness is how some of the musicians feel that there is a sparse and apathetic fan community when it comes to live music. This appears to contradict existing research, which suggests that New Zealanders have a high attendance rate at live musical performances (Creative New Zealand, 2015; Scott & Craig, 2012). However, this high attendance rate is not reflected in the data. Antony and Emma suggest that New Zealand's live-music-goers seem to cluster around certain genres, such as pop and electronic music, with Emma saying that support outside these genres “isn't very strong, especially with rock music”. Coupled with the small size of the local music economy, frustration with this lack of support for live music is the

driving motivation for Antony to pack up and move overseas to pursue his career in music in the near future. He feels that there are more opportunities, more audiences, and more money to be made in an overseas market such as the United States.

Overall, there are both positive and negative aspects of the smallness of New Zealand's music scene for the musicians interviewed. A tight-knit, collaborative community that genuinely supports each other exists around the musicians. However, it is important to note that this community is not perfectly egalitarian, and levels of exclusivity exist within it. Furthermore, the smallness of the New Zealand music scene poses barriers to the musicians in regards to geographic isolation, and also in regards to a sparse, apathetic fan community.

5.2 '*Nobody knows*'

The next theme that comes out of the data is that of uncertainty in the music industry. The title for this theme, '*nobody knows*', comes from a concept outlined by Caves (2000). Caves suggests that it is difficult to determine the potential success of creative products, because buyers have subjective reactions to symbolic goods. Although Caves describes this in terms of the uncertainty of success for creative products, this theme proposes that the concept of '*nobody knows*' can be understood more broadly in relation to the uncertain nature of flexible work in the music industry. Indeed, it could be argued that the uncertainty of a creative product's popularity has a flow-on effect, in terms of making the labour conditions in the industry uncertain. Therefore this theme focuses on how career uncertainty is experienced by the musicians interviewed. This uncertainty is understood by all the musicians to be a common element of work in the music industry, and that what comes with this is an irregular pattern of work. However, it is interesting to note that this inconsistency of work does not cause them to feel insecure or stressed; instead, some even speak about how they enjoy the flexibility it provides them.

All of the musicians express an understanding of the uncertain nature of working in the music industry. They all speak about the reality of how working in the music industry is not a career path that can be easily followed. As Antony says, "you're

playing the game, you know. You're not climbing the ladder". The uncertainty of their music work corresponds with the literature that suggests career uncertainty in the music industry is common (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2010, 2011; Cooper & Wills, 1989; Bennet, 2007; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Sternbach, 1995; van den Eynde et al., 2015; Wills & Cooper, 1987; Zwaan et al., 2009). Uncertain work is not exclusive to the music industry. It is understood that this is an increasingly common characteristic of work in the creative industries, with irregular, stressful and inconsistent work often being the norm for creative workers, due to the prevalence of casual, short-term, project-based work in the industries (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Dex et al. 2000; Gill, 2002, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Lee, 2007; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; McRobbie, 2002b, 2007; Neff et al., 2005; Perrons, 2003).

It is widely understood that an aspect of career uncertainty in the music industry is that of irregular working patterns for music workers (Bennet, 2007; van den Eynde et al., 2015; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Sternbach, 1995; Wills & Cooper, 1988). All three musicians note that when they were preparing for and executing a tour, their lives were busier and they had more work to do. But their working lives are often subject to change, with stretches of downtime in between busier periods; as Brad notes, "not everyone's on tour all the time". Two of the musicians, Antony and Brad, express a desire for their work to be more regular and stable, with Antony stating that he wants fewer fluctuations in his work so that he can have more consistent time to work on his music at home. This is consistent with existing research, which indicates workers in the creative-industries would prefer their work to be less uncertain (Dex et al. 2000; Ertel et al. 2005; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008; Paterson, 2001; Rowlands & Handy, 2012).

One outcome of such irregular and inconsistent work in the creative industries, as suggested by literature, is that of the feeling of insecurity and stress amongst workers (Dex et al. 2000; Ertel et al. 2005; McRobbie, 2002a; Rowlands & Handy, 2012; Umney & Kretsos, 2015; van den Eynde et al., 2015). However, interestingly, such feelings are not very widely discussed in the data. Although Antony discusses how he knows that there are so many other career paths he could have chosen instead of music that would have given him more financial security, and Emma

talks of the stress she felt by organising her band's upcoming tour, there is no extensive discussion of any major negative impacts that irregular work may have for the musicians. In fact, Emma actually frames the stress she experiences as being good - as she says, "it stresses me out, but... to me, I wouldn't get anything done if I wasn't stressed, so stress is a good thing for me". When asked about whether the irregular structure of his work ever resulted in the feeling of a lack of security, Brad says that the flexibility of his work is actually the "beauty of it in a lot of ways", and that he is very "happy" with this structure at this point in time of his life.

Overall, these music workers appear to reaffirm Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2010) assertion that although creative workers complain about the uncertainty and insecurity of creative work, they are also "prepared to speak of it as necessary and even desirable" (p. 13). The autonomy and freedom offered by flexible working arrangements appears to "override any misgivings, constraints or disadvantages that might emerge" (Banks, 2007, p. 55) in the lives of the musicians interviewed. Uncertainty in the music industry, then, is a significant theme in the data, as 'nobody knows' how the careers of the musicians interviewed are going to play out. This uncertainty has resulted in irregular working patterns for the musicians, however, they do not appear to feel stressed or insecure because of this.

5.3 Authenticity

A third theme that comes out of the data is that of authenticity. Peterson (2005) indicates that authenticity does not inherently exist in a cultural product or person; instead it is a process that is socially constructed, and exists differently in respective fields. It can therefore be defined as a "field-specific measure of legitimacy, created and manipulated through social processes, mobilised discursively and practically" (Gibson, 2014, p. 40). Within the realm of music, the discourse of authenticity revolves around opposition to commerce (Strand, 2014) and truthful self-presentation (Gibson, 2014). Both of these aspects of authenticity discourse are evident in the data. The musicians all appear to primarily have intrinsic motivations over extrinsic ones, and they all have the desire to remain authentic artists by choosing not to "sell out". These efforts to come across as real and genuine also

appear to be present in regards to the social media presence of the musicians interviewed.

Bourdieu (1980, 1993) indicates that in order to gain legitimacy in a creative field, it is important that cultural producers prioritise the accumulation of artistic credibility or prestige over financial gain. This is what he describes as an “upside-down economic world” (1993, p. 40); cultural producers who are primarily motivated to make money from their work are understood to be less authentic than producers who receive little financial compensation, suggesting that authenticity is linked to intrinsic motivation. Wider literature on labour in the creative industries commonly addresses how creative workers choose to work in their fields mainly for intrinsically-motivated reasons (Honey, Heron & Jackson, 1997; Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2007; Oakley, 2009). Evidence of intrinsic motivation driving the musicians over extrinsic motivation is present in the data. The musicians mention how they are motivated to produce good quality work, and they measure this in an aesthetic or intrinsic way, rather than in relation to record sales or other market-metrics of success. For example, Antony says the motivating factors for him as a musician are to play really well, and for people to engage with the work he is producing. He adds that he is motivated to create music so that he can derive “satisfaction from the work.... And to really enjoy what [he is]... doing”. Emma also describes how her band has improved a lot and has started to produce “good” work after they spent a lot of extra hours refining their “craft”; she suggests how their new work is sonically of a higher quality and skill level than their old work. Such conceptions of good quality work correspond with Hesmondhalgh and Baker’s (2011) research. They indicate creative workers measure high quality work by the aesthetic standard of what they are creating, rather than by any financial metric. In the data at hand, then, the musicians’ drive to create work of a high aesthetic quality illustrates their embodiment of a social expectation in the cultural industries: that in order to be an authentic cultural producer, you must prioritise building artistic credibility and skill over financial gain (Bourdieu, 1980; Gibson, 2014). This is a context-specific marker of authenticity and legitimacy that the musicians are adhering to, and it is evident through their explicit discursive explanations of what motivates them to produce creative outputs.

The idea that cultural producers are less authentic if they choose to make cultural products in the interest of economic profits was further evident in the data through the musicians' resistance to 'selling-out'. As Bourdieu (1980, p. 262) states, creative producers "who 'go commercial' condemn themselves". The musicians are clearly aware of this through their explicit disdain for making commercially-driven music. Emma speaks about how she had previously worked with a number of different producers who had encouraged her rock band to become "more poppy and commercial sounding". This, however, was not an option for her:

"To me, that sort of 'selling out' is more to do with moving towards top 40. Where we were at with Ashei music was we were sitting weirdly between pop and rock. And we knew we really needed to choose a direction; to go heavier, or to go poppier. Well, going poppier was absolutely not an option, we all grew up on rock music to varying degrees and it is our absolute ambition to be known as a rock band."

Emma therefore appears to have strict cognitive boundaries around what it means to be an authentic rock artist, which reaffirms Curran's (1996) research that suggests creative workers have rigid rules around how to behave within their chosen genre. Indeed, if her band was to adhere to a sound more traditionally associated with pop music, then this would make her artistic identity less authentic, which is a concession she is not willing to make.

Brad similarly describes a scenario where his band was not willing to make compromises for the sake of financial benefit. As he describes, the label he was working with at the time had requested that they edit a recurring expletive out of one of their album's songs before the album was released, but both he and his band partner refused to do so. Having reflected on the situation, he notes that they had perhaps been "childish" about it, and that it was important to see the situation from the label's perspective. Nevertheless, he had this to say:

"I don't think I'd ever want to write music with that sort of idea in mind... it's not creative then, you're just making music for money's sake and that's... a bit fake. I think it's important to understand the other side of the story, but don't let that influence the art."

This “scuffle” Brad describes illustrates how issues of authenticity and selling out are a major point of conflict between creative workers and cultural intermediary figures, or ‘suits’ (Bilton, 2007; Negus, 2002). Although Gloor (2008, para. 3) suggests selling-out is becoming more accepted amongst musicians and has “likely completed the cycle from something artists avoid to something they embrace”, examples from the data suggest otherwise. Even though all the musicians undertake work outside of their own music work to “pay the bills”, which will be expanded on further in the next theme, the musicians do not let this bill-paying motivation drive their craft or the direction of their music work. In fact, Antony describes how he felt that one of his more commercially-successful music projects was not the work he was “most proud of”, and it was not as “personally gratifying” as other work that he did, so he chose to drop that project in favour of pursuing his other work. These examples from the data suggests that Gloor (2008) overstates the favourability of ‘selling-out’ for musicians, and that perhaps the musicians’ relationship with the commercial side of music work is more complex.

Another aspect of the musician’s sense of authenticity is in relation to how they use social media. As Gibson (2014) suggests, an important aspect of “claiming authenticity” for musical artists is that they “accurately represent their own life” in their lyrics and self-presentation (p. 40). One major outlet of self-presentation for contemporary cultural producers, such as musicians, is social media (Marwick & boyd, 2011). Social media is a key way in which an audience is developed and maintained for cultural producers, and this practice involves “presenting a seemingly authentic, intimate image of self while meeting fan expectations and maintaining important relationships” (p. 140). Indeed, all the musicians interviewed describe using social media in this way. They all speak about how they try to keep their presence on social media authentic and genuine, with Antony saying that he strives to make his social media posting a “true reflection” of himself. The musicians also express that in order to keep their social media accounts for their music work authentic, they like to post more when they have gigs or releases coming up; otherwise, it feels a bit fake. As Brad notes, he thinks it is far “less authentic [to post on social media] if there is nothing going on”. Nevertheless, he adds that he thinks it is important to post non-music related content sometimes too, as it communicates “the personality of the band” to their followers. These examples

illustrate how all of the musicians are aware of the importance of fan perception of authenticity in fostering relationships between themselves and their respective fans (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016; Marwick & boyd, 2011). As Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) indicate, fans feel a strong emotional attachment and personal bond with people they follow on social media when they perceive posts as being authentic, and this has a positive impact in regards to influencing fan behaviour, especially in regards to purchase likelihood.

Furthermore, the musicians also believe that social media is an important way to open up communication channels with their audience, and that it is a good way to personally engage and interact with their fan base. The interaction with fans is one way for a cultural producer to update their fans with information about their work (Potts, et al. 2008; Smith, 2009) create ongoing fan interest and loyalty (Kulash, 2010), and ultimately appear more authentic on social media (Marwick & boyd, 2011). By engaging with audiences online and by presenting them with a 'true reflection' of themselves as musicians, it could be theorised then that the musicians interviewed accurately adhere to discourses of authenticity present in the music industry. Through deliberately being truthful and sincere in their social media self-presentation and image, the musicians are letting their audiences know that their music work is the 'real' thing, and not manufactured for an undisclosed motive (Hughes, 2000).

Being authentic in their music work is an important trait for all the musicians interviewed. The musicians discuss how their intrinsic motivations to create music are of a higher priority than their extrinsic motivations. They also describe how they are all vehemently opposed to the concept of "selling out", and that making music with commercial goals in mind is not authentic. The musicians' desires to operate authentically also translates in regards to their social media presence; it is of high importance that they appear real and genuine to their followers on these platforms.

5.4 Cultural entrepreneurialism

A major theme that comes through in the data is that of cultural entrepreneurialism. As Lingo and Tepper (2013) suggest, one important way in which creative workers manage uncertainty in the creative industries is through acting as cultural entrepreneurs. The musicians interviewed all appear to embody the notion of a cultural entrepreneur in a number of ways. They try to manage the uncertainty of music work by networking with others in the industry in order to increase the opportunities available to them, and also by being multi-skilled, particularly through the aid of digital technology. However, there are also aspects of the music industry that the musicians cannot proactively manage, such as the lack of financial compensation from music work. They therefore undertake external employment in order to supplement their creative endeavours. But the musicians are nevertheless open to the prospect of making money from their work, which illustrates how the boundary between artist and entrepreneur is considerably blurry in the creative industries.

Although it could be argued that entrepreneurialism is a more risk-prone and uncertain mode of working than more traditionally secure modes (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999/2005), the creative workers interviewed nevertheless appear to adopt entrepreneurial characteristics in order to try and exert some level of control over the inherently uncertain nature of the music industry. There is much emphasis in the data about wanting to be proactive and put themselves and their work “out there”; they did not want to just “leave it up to chance”. One crucial way in which they try to exert this control is through proactively making contacts and social connections in the music industry. As Emma explains, “you can’t just... exist in a vacuum and expect to do well, you have to network with people and communicate and meet other people doing something that might... help you out”. This process of socialisation and networking has been widely written about in scholarship as being fundamental to the lives of workers in the creative industries (Banks, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Murdock, 2003; Neff et al., 2005; Oakley, 2009; Scott, 2012). Some scholars describe this process with reference to the accumulation of social capital (Murdock, 2003; Scott, 2012; Power & Scott, 2004), which is defined as being the aggregate of resources linked to someone’s social relationships and networks (Bourdieu, 1997). In other words, the

amount of social capital held by an individual depends on the size of his or her network, and by the amount of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) held by the people in this network. Social capital is of primary importance for cultural entrepreneurs, as it can be mobilised to be converted into other forms of capital (Scott, 2012). This process of capital conversion is evident in the data. For example, Antony speaks about how he exists in a community of musicians who help him out and teach him the technical side of producing music. In this sense, he is converting social capital into cultural capital; he is using his social relationships in order to attain a deeper skill level and cultural knowledge about his craft, which can then help him advance his music career (Scott, 2012).

Another significant way in which the musicians try to exert control in their working lives is by being multi-skilled. The trait of being multi-skilled is a commonly cited feature of cultural entrepreneurialism (Bilton, 2010; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Ellmeier, 2003; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2009; Neff et al., 2005; Ryan & Hearn, 2010; Scott, 2012). One aspect of this is the prevalence of self-management in the creative industries, which Bilton (2010) describes as an “entrepreneurial necessity” (p. 4). If low-paid creative workers are to operate successfully in the creative marketplace, then they are often required to manage and organise the administrative side of creative operations themselves (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Ryan & Hearn, 2010). Although Leadbeater (2004) indicates creative workers lack management skills and experience, all of the musicians interviewed describe elements of successful self-management in their working lives. Brad and Antony previously operated with external management, but both describe how they had more recently shifted to a mode of self-management. Emma describes how although she does have a band manager, he is the “big ideas guy” who secures opportunities and provides strategic direction for the band, and she is the “logistics guy” who does all the necessary administration and organisational work. Furthermore, the musicians also describe how they are actively trying to learn about how the industry works, and that they invest in themselves through acquiring new skills and knowledge. This ranges from learning technical musical skills, such as recording and production work, to more mundane administrative work, such as filing taxes.

The development of such administrative skills is a way in which cultural entrepreneurs accumulate cultural capital in industries such as the music industry (Bourdieu, 1997). As Bourdieu suggests, cultural capital in its embodied state is “self-improvement”, and involves taking time and effort to acquire skills and cultural knowledge that cannot be “transmitted instantaneously” (p. 48). The acquisition of cultural capital is important for cultural entrepreneurs who lack economic capital. As Scott (2012) points out, the accumulation of alternative capital such as this has the potential to be converted into credibility with cultural intermediaries, in the form of ‘buzz’, which can then can hopefully help them further their career and can later be converted into economic capital.

A crucial tool that helps creative workers operate as multi-skilled cultural entrepreneurs is that of digital technology (Ryan & Hearn, 2010; Scott, 2012; Thomson, 2013; Young & Collins, 2010). As Thomson (2013, p. 514) states, the development of technology has “atomised the music industry”, meaning that the opportunity for career development and progression as a musician in the digital age has been dispersed beyond the control of record labels. The possibilities of the music industry’s ‘atomisation’ are noted by the musicians interviewed; as Brad states, the industry has gone “super DIY now”, with artists like himself being able to do so much more themselves through digital technology without being controlled by a label. Antony similarly states that he feels digital technology has changed the industry “for the better”, as it allows artists like himself to publish music online and “engage with people all over the world”. This touches on one key aspect of the potential of digital technology for musicians - that of increased exposure (Young & Collins, 2010).

Although all the musicians recognise the fact that there is little financial promise from online music distribution and streaming (Marshall, 2012; Young & Collins, 2010), they appear to believe the potential benefits of exposure and discovery through digital technology outweighs this lack of financial compensation. As one musician says, “if I’m not getting a dollar every time someone downloads my song, or 50 cents or whatever my cut is by the end of it... that doesn’t bother me”. This attitude amongst the artists further illustrates a way in which they mobilise alternative capitals as cultural entrepreneurs (Scott, 2012). In this case, symbolic

capital is the primary form of alternative capital that is generated through online exposure, and is accumulated online in the form of quantifiable engagement statistics, such as streaming numbers, downloads, and social media followers. Such capital is understood to be the dominant alternative form of capital, as it is a “veritable credit” that can be used in the long-term for potential economic profits (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 142), and is therefore closely linked to the generation of ‘buzz’ around a musician’s work (Scott, 2012).

However, even though the musicians interviewed try to exert control over the uncertainty of the music industry in the ways outlined above, there are, nevertheless, aspects of their working lives that they cannot control. One such aspect is the lack of financial compensation from their music work. This is a ubiquitous scenario for creative entrepreneurs; they are often thought to operate with a significant absence of economic capital at the start of their careers (Ellmeier, 2003; Scott, 2012). Scott (2012) suggests that a common way cultural entrepreneurs manage this lack of financial capital is by undertaking work outside their creative projects. This is clearly evident in the data amongst all of the musicians interviewed. Some have undertaken work that falls under the wider creative industries umbrella, such as working as a graphic designer in a creative agency and also as a music teacher, but others do work outside of the creative industries too, such as hospitality work.

This “bisecting” of worker identities is a common feature of cultural entrepreneurialism in the creative industries (Pizanias, 1992, as cited in Bain, 2005; Scott, 2012), and appears to be discussed as a common-sense assumption about life as a musician in the data. As Brad states, “it’s just like a reality I guess.... Being a musician, you’re going to understand you’re gonna work a shitty day job”. The evidence of supplementary work in the lives of the musicians interviewed also illustrates Neff et al.’s (2005) assertion that cultural entrepreneurs in the creative industries balance more fulfilling creative work with more mundane work that pays the bills. As Emma describes, her graphic design work comes second to her band work, and she mainly does it “to make up the extra money to pay for more band stuff”. Antony similarly speaks about how, although he resents doing covers gigs at weddings, it is work that he undertakes when he can because he is trying to think

“pragmatically” about it. As he explains, “if I go play at that wedding, then I can go buy that new microphone I want.... Or...that’s going to allow me that much more time to keep following my creative instinct.” These “pragmatic” attitudes towards the economic “realities” of music work illustrate how the musicians interviewed bridge the gap between remaining authentic and earning a living (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). As Antony describes it, this balance is very clearly to him “the two sides of the coin... there’s always gonna be the side that you just do because you feel in your heart and soul to do it, and then there’s always going to be the side that you do because you need to... pay the bills, and put food on the table.” However, Antony’s pragmatic attitude can be interpreted more critically. As the literature suggests, the ubiquity of cultural entrepreneurs in the creative industries creates an increasingly individualised working culture, where workers are required to bear more responsibility and risk themselves (Banks, 2007; Gill & Pratt, 2008; McGuigan, 2010; Neff et al., 2005; Umney & Kretsos, 2014). Antony emphasises how it is down to adjusting his individual attitude to fix his economic troubles, rather than the existence of any wider structural problems (Cohen, 2012; Lee, 2014; McRobbie, 2002a).

Although the musicians interviewed are opposed to the idea of ‘selling out’ or making music with a commercial purpose in mind, as outlined in the previous theme, an interesting aspect that comes out of the data is that they are nevertheless receptive to possible ways they could make money from their craft. The musicians describe how they hope that one day their music work will be their main source of income so that they do not have to continue undertaking other forms of employment. Furthermore, both Brad and Antony describe how they have each had a song that was used in an advertisement for a commercial company. What is interesting about these two cases is that there appears to be no sense of shame evident in the way they speak about the commercial use of their songs; instead, they both reflect on it as a positive opportunity for their music careers. These attitudes illustrate the wider changing nature of musicians’ perspectives towards commercial affiliation, and about how being entrepreneurial as a musical artist “is now not only possible, but a prerequisite” (Thomson, 2013, p. 516). Klein et al. (2016) and Thomson (2013) indicate that the impact of technology on the economics of the music industry is what has caused this shift in attitude amongst musicians towards

being more receptive to the market. The corrosion of income from record sales due to the prevalence of piracy and low-paying streaming services has meant that alternative streams of revenue, such as sponsorship or commercial partnerships, are now more commonly accepted ways for musicians to get exposure for their music (Klein et al., 2016). As Hopper (2013) indicates, the commercial placement of music was “once considered to be the lowest form of selling out, of betraying fans and compromising principles”, but is now “regarded as a crucial cornerstone of success” (p. 3). This shift in attitude evident in the data, then, shows how musicians can maintain authenticity and artistic integrity whilst still being entrepreneurial and business-savvy. The values and ideologies of artistic integrity still exist, however they are perhaps more nuanced than some literature suggests; it is too simplistic to draw a dichotomy between the ‘artist’ and the ‘creative entrepreneur’ as de Bruin (2005) does, for example.

Cultural entrepreneurialism is a mode of working that all of the musicians interviewed appear to conform to, in order to manage the uncertainty of working in the music industry. They do this through networking with people in the industry, and by endeavouring to be multi-skilled. However, there are aspects of the industry that the musicians cannot control, such as being underpaid for their music work. In order to supplement this lack of financial compensation, they therefore all undertake additional work outside of their music work. Nevertheless, the musicians are all open-minded in regards to the possibility of making money from their work, which illustrates how it is difficult to draw a distinct line between artist and entrepreneur in the contemporary creative industries.

5.5 Cultural intermediaries

A final theme that comes out of the data is that of cultural intermediaries. Industry intermediaries play an important role in the mediating position between cultural producers and audiences (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011; Gibson, 2003; Hirsch, 1972; Peterson, 1997; Peterson & Anand, 2004; Peterson & Berger, 1971; Scott, 2012; Zwaan & ter Bogt, 2009; Zwaan et al., 2009). Although the internet has drastically affected an artist’s relationship with potential listeners and has changed the role of intermediaries in the music industry (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Morris, 2014; Young &

Collins, 2010), these 'cultural intermediaries', as Negus (2002) and Scott (2012) call them, continue to have an important place in the field of music production. It is argued that they provide musical artists with necessary forms of capital and support, which is particularly useful for musicians in the early stages of their career (Scott, 2012). In the data, numerous types of cultural intermediaries are present in the lives of all the musicians. All of the musicians have had involvement with industry professionals in some way, ranging from working with management to working with music PR practitioners. The musicians first garnered recognition from these cultural intermediaries through generating 'buzz' around their work, and then they received help from these cultural intermediaries in relation to economic and social resources in the industry. However, these cultural intermediaries have not been constantly crucial to the lives of the musicians; they have acted more as stepping stones in their musical careers, and have not been restrictive in regards to the musicians' creative freedom. Instead, cultural intermediaries in the form of cultural policy support bodies, particularly New Zealand On Air, perhaps appear to have more significance and power in the lives of the musicians.

Cultural production in fields such as the music industry is channelled through cultural intermediaries, who are industry figures "in a range of settings who manage and promote certain flows of sounds, images, words and commodities" (Gibson, 2003, p. 205). In other words, these cultural intermediaries largely engage in the creation and distribution of symbolic information and material in the industry, therefore it is highly beneficial for musical artists to be noticed by these figures (Negus, 2002). All of the musicians interviewed describe how they have had various experiences working with established cultural intermediary professionals in the music market. This comprises a range of activities, including working with music PR agencies, working with music management, and working with an independent record label.

In order to catch the eye of these intermediaries in the first place, however, it is important that musicians in the early stages of their career generate a certain amount of 'buzz' around their music work (Caves, 2000; Scott, 2012). This appears to be the case with all of the musicians interviewed; they all describe ways in which they generated buzz through the mobilisation of alternative capitals, which then

secured the interest of the cultural intermediaries they worked with. For example, Antony speaks about how his band drew on existing relationships they had in the industry to secure a partnership with a manager. Another musician, Brad, describes how receiving a \$10,000 grant from New Zealand On Air's Making Tracks scheme is what "kick-started" the band, as it helped them produce their first EP and a music video, which then led them to being picked up by management and a record label. These instances of capital mobilisation, social capital in the first example and a combination of capitals in the second, led to the generation of "buzz", and, according to Scott (2012), are what signify a musician's market potential to important cultural intermediaries, such as managers and record labels. As Zwaan et al. (2009) suggest, although cultural intermediaries such as managers are "important catalysts" for the career successes of musicians, these intermediaries "would not invest their time and money in certain musicians if they were not confident enough about earning back their investments" (p. 261). The generation of 'buzz' on the part of the artists, then, has been an important step in the lives of the musicians interviewed, as it has given them access to key intermediary figures in the music industry.

Another significant aspect of the relationship between the musicians and these cultural intermediary industry professionals is how these relationships have led to opportunities and have opened-up doors in their music careers. For example, Brad describes how working with a record label led his band to relocating to London for two years to record an album. Whilst they were there, the label organised a number of gigs for them, and also introduced them to a music PR agency who helped them generate press coverage about their music work. Antony similarly describes how he is aware that his previous band got "all the benefits" of their manager's vast network of contacts in the music industry. As he reflects: "I don't think anything would have probably happened with that band if it hadn't been for.... what our manager was able to do". These experiences of the musicians with cultural intermediaries reaffirm the idea that creative workers are not solitary in the way they work; instead, they work in mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships within networks in their respective industries (Broekhuizen, Lampel & Rietveld, 2013; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999; Oakley, 2009). Moreover, the data corroborates Zwaan et al.'s (2009) assertion that cultural intermediary figures are essential for the

growth of musicians' careers. As Zwaan et al. suggest, being represented by an intermediary gives musicians a "stamp of approval" in the industry (p. 261), which then gives them access to a wider network of important figures and opens up opportunities for career progression.

However, it is important to note that these cultural intermediaries appear to exist in the lives of the artists more so as stepping stones in their careers, as opposed to being a constant necessity to succeed. Indeed, although these intermediary figures have certainly been important in the growth and development of the musicians as they have helped them yield opportunities in the industry, it appears as though they are not consistently crucial to the musicians' working lives. As Brad describes, although his band spent two years under the guidance of a label, management and a PR company, they now feel quite comfortable organising and promoting their band themselves. Furthermore, Antony speaks about how his band "self-funded everything", without the financial help of a record label or grant. The role of the cultural intermediaries in the lives of the musicians interviewed therefore challenges some of the literature that suggests intermediary figures are essential to a musician's success (Caves, 2000; Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011; Hirsch, 1972; Hrac, 2015; Peterson, 2005; Scott, 2012). Hirsch (1972) proposes that in order for creative goods to get to the marketplace, they must first be approved by cultural intermediaries. However, the data shows that this is not the case. Although it has been illustrated above that cultural intermediaries play an important part in helping musicians secure working opportunities and that they provide them with useful learning opportunities, these relationships appear instead to help the musicians build their skills so that they can become self-dependent, multi-skilled cultural entrepreneurs. This appears to affirm research by Broekhuizen, Lampel and Rietveld (2013) that suggests bigger companies in the creative industries have made a shift from dominant forces to working alongside creative workers as allies. The influence of cultural intermediaries in the lives of musicians, then, is therefore undeniably present, but it should not be overstated.

Furthermore, the relationships the musicians have with these professional cultural intermediaries also challenges the literature that suggests these intermediary figures pose limits to creative workers' creativity (Gil & Spiller, 2007; Lingo & O'Mahony,

2010; Scott, 2002; Shultz, 2013). As Emma reflects, the producer her band started working with “got” it that they wanted to be a rock band, and he did not try to shape them into something else that sounded “more sparkly” and commercial. As she says, “[he] let me... yell and scream in the vocal booth as opposed to singing softer, singing gentler, so... He’s awesome”. Brad also had a similar level of creative freedom with the intermediaries he had worked with:

“We were pretty free to do what we wanted.... [the label] totally let us do what we wanted to do. We were like ‘we’re gonna make this kind of album’ and they gave us complete creative control basically. The only thing that they weighed in on was... choosing singles to release... but even then...we made that a pretty democratic process”.

These scenarios illustrate that perhaps the musicians are more autonomous in their relationships with cultural intermediaries than some of the literature may suggest. For example, Lingo and O’Mahony (2010) suggest that music producers exert a level of control over the production process in order to try to navigate unpredictability in the market, but it seems in the data that this was not the case.

Perhaps a more significant type of cultural intermediary in the lives of the musicians interviewed appears to be in the form of cultural policy support bodies, predominantly New Zealand On Air. All of the musicians have received promotional and/or financial support from the organisation. For example, two of the musicians, Emma and Brad, have successfully received funding from New Zealand On Air’s Making Tracks scheme at least once, and the other musician, Antony, has applied to the scheme a number of times. Both Antony and Emma also mention how they have been featured at least once on New Zealand On Air’s New Tracks playlist, formerly known as “The Kiwi Hit Disk”.

What was interesting about the involvement the musicians have had with New Zealand On Air was in regards to how important they think the funding body is, and that they all see New Zealand On Air’s position in the New Zealand music landscape as being important and integral to the industry’s health. They are all largely positive about New Zealand On Air’s funding operations, and those who got funding describe how important the funding was in the progression of their

band's success. As Brad describes, being a recipient of New Zealand On Air funding was what triggered his band into taking music seriously, and it pushed them further than they would have gone if they had not got funding. This aspect of the data stands in opposition to some of the literature on cultural policy, which suggests the focus of economic accountability measures in various cultural policies has a limiting and restrictive impact on creative workers (Caust, 2003; Craik, 2005). As Caust (2003, p. 53) states, "if artists are prioritising the perceived requirements of either their funders or their audience over the production of interesting and innovative work, then the actual work produced may in fact be less interesting". But this did not seem to be a concern for the musicians interviewed. For example, one of the stipulations of New Zealand On Air's Making Tracks scheme is that the music funded must have the potential for 'broadcast outcomes' (New Zealand On Air, n.d.); in other words, it must be seen to have the potential for quantifiable metrics of engagement, in the form of digital hits or plays, or the potential for airplay in New Zealand's largely commercially-dominated broadcasting sphere (Myllylahti, 2015). But none of the musicians seem to see any problems with this stipulation. Indeed, as Emma reflects, New Zealand On Air's support for music that has the potential of 'broadcast outcomes' seems to "make sense" to her. As she says, "[Making Tracks] is a government funded programme, and the government wants the economy of New Zealand and all industries to be thriving. And... the safest bet...[for funding] is commercially accessible, broadcastable music".

Furthermore, all of the musicians also reflect on the validation the support body supplies for them. It appears that New Zealand On Air is a cultural intermediary in the lives of the musicians that has a significant amount of gatekeeping power, in regards to choosing who gets funding and who does not. As Shoemaker and Vos (2009) suggest, "gatekeepers determine what becomes a person's social reality, a particular view of the world" (p. 15), and this appears to be the case for all of the musicians interviewed. For example, Brad describes how New Zealand On Air's decision to give him funding catalysed his musical career, and acted as a trigger for him to take music seriously. Moreover, when Antony and Emma describe the times they were rejected from the Making Tracks scheme, they both talk about changes in their thinking and behaviours. For example, Antony says that he saw receiving funding from New Zealand On Air as a sign of legitimacy for the work he was

doing, and that he tries not to think about his rejection from the Making Tracks scheme “too much”, because then he starts “getting really annoyed”. Emma speaks about how it hurt “right in the heart” when her band did not receive funding, but that it encouraged her to go away and keep working at her craft so that she would start to make “better” songs. The shaping of the musicians’ realities by New Zealand On Air therefore illustrates the power of their funding decisions and the impact they have in terms of providing validation for musicians. Indeed, these funding decisions are evidence of governmentality in regards to cultural work, as the funding decisions clearly seem to be designed to “stimulate self-regulating practices” in the working lives of the musicians interviewed (Banks, 2007, p. 64).

Cultural intermediaries are an important part of the working lives of the musicians interviewed. These intermediary figures exist in the form of industry professionals, who the musicians caught the eye of early on in their careers by generating alternative capitals. These intermediaries then have provided the musicians with various working and learning opportunities, which has been beneficial to their careers. However, it is important not to overstate the influence of these professional cultural intermediaries in the lives of the musicians interviewed; they appear to act more as stepping stones for the musicians to become self-dependent, rather than as crucial figures at every step of the musicians’ careers. It appears instead that the most significant cultural intermediaries for the musicians are cultural policy support bodies. New Zealand On Air in particular is seen as being very important by all of the musicians interviewed, and seems to act as a powerful gatekeeper for the musicians when it comes to Making Tracks funding decisions.

Conclusion

Several common themes appear to come out of the data. Firstly, the sense amongst the musicians that the New Zealand music scene feels small is an idea frequently discussed, and appears to have both positive and negative impacts on the way they work in the industry. Secondly, the notion that ‘nobody knows’ how their career in the music industry will play out is a significant theme, as it is commonly accepted by the musicians interviewed that having a career in the music industry is an uncertain path to take. Thirdly, the desire for authenticity as musicians appears to

be an important priority, both in relation to the way they make music and the way they present themselves online. Fourthly, all of the musicians appear to operate as cultural entrepreneurs, as this is how they attempt to manage uncertainty in the music industry. Finally, the presence of cultural intermediaries in the lives of the musicians is an evident theme, and this exists in the form of industry professionals and cultural policy support bodies. These themes suggest that there are internal and external constraints that impact the work these musicians produce, and their lived experiences seem to signal that the conditions encountered are standard, and perhaps to a greater or lesser extent, accepted. Although I have considered the significance of these conditions throughout this chapter, I intend to 'zoom out' further in the discussion chapter to follow.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Introduction

The question behind this research was, ‘what are the experiences of New Zealand musicians regarding the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry?’ These experiences are important to investigate, considering the rise in importance of creative industries such as the music industry in policy discourse over the past two decades (Craik, 2005). Not only are creative industries expected to provide fruitful employment opportunities and contribute to a country’s gross domestic product (Davies & Sigthorsson, 2013; Hartley, 2005), but they are also expected to demonstrate quantifiable measures of accountability in order to justify a continuation of government financial support (Caust, 2003; Galloway & Dunlop, 2007; Garnham, 2005). Such a market-led focus in cultural policy initiatives inevitably trickles down and affects the everyday working lives of musicians. However, to date, no government bodies have published any research that investigates musicians’ experiences of working in the industry. The research at hand has therefore focused on understanding the subjective experiences of these musicians, but these experiences have been contextualised in relation to existing research that explores wider political, economic and cultural facets that might influence the nature of the industry’s labour conditions. Using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis, five major themes have been found to be present in the data. These included the sense among the musicians that the New Zealand music scene is small; the presence of career uncertainty; the importance of authenticity; cultural entrepreneurialism; and the existence of cultural intermediaries in the musicians’ working lives.

6.1 Concepts of good & bad work

In order to understand the significance of the research data and to draw wider conclusions from it, it is necessary to conceptualise whether the subjective experiences of musicians working in New Zealand's music industry can be interpreted as being overall positive or worthwhile. Indeed, it is all very well to reveal the experiences of the workers, but unless these can be conceptualised in a way that clarifies whether or not major intervention or change is needed on the part of both employers and policymakers, then the research is not ultimately serving its wider purpose. In order to conceptualise the research in this way, then, it is useful to apply Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011) concepts of 'good' and 'bad' work. They suggest 'good work' cannot be simply measured by the amount of pleasure or enjoyment a worker may feel about their work. Although this may be a significant part of a worker's labour experiences, frustration and difficulty are also inevitable elements of good work, therefore it is necessary to go "beyond happiness and pleasure" in order to conceptualise good and bad work (p. 28). They go on to define good work in the creative industries as involving good pay, working hours and safety; autonomy; interest and involvement in work; sociality; high self-esteem; creative fulfilment/ self-realisation; work-life balance; job security; and creating high-quality products that contribute to the common good. On the other hand, bad work consists of poor pay, hours and job safety; powerlessness; boredom; isolation; low self-esteem and self-doubt; overwork; job insecurity and risk; and producing low-quality products that do not benefit the wellbeing of others.

Although the musicians interviewed certainly describe negative features of their work that fall under Hesmondhalgh and Baker's 'bad work' category, such as low pay, irregular working hours, and career uncertainty, the musicians' experiences of 'good work' seem to outweigh these downfalls. This is surprising, considering the wide range of research outlined in the earlier chapters of this thesis that suggests workers who undertake creative labour experience a great deal of stress due to the uncertain and precarious nature of work in creative industries (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Gill, 2002, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Lee, 2007; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; McRobbie, 2002b, 2007; Neff et al., 2005). However, all of the musicians interviewed emphasise the pleasures they feel with being able to creatively express themselves through their work; they describe how they are

motivated to produce work of a high aesthetic quality; and they have authentic, tight-knit relationships with others in the music community. Perhaps more significantly, they all describe how they are able to manage the uncertainty of work in the music industry without too much trouble, and that, in fact, some of them enjoy the freedom and autonomy provided to them by the flexible nature of music work.

This overall optimism expressed by the musicians regarding their work experiences could be interpreted in a few critical ways. A number of theorists outline how intrinsic rewards provided through creative work in fact operate as mechanisms of control, as they motivate workers to accept the exploitative aspects of the work (Antcliff, 2005; Caves, 2000; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2002a; Neff et al., 2005; Oakley, 2009; Stahl, 2006; Ursell, 2000). As Stahl (2006) suggests, the perceived freedom and autonomy creative workers have in the music industry acts as a pacifying tool, as it masks broader issues of structural inequality in the industry, where only very few musicians succeed as full-time workers and accumulate the vast majority of the industry's wealth. The remaining majority of musicians, on the other hand, struggle to make a living from their music work, and must depend on the gatekeeping abilities of cultural intermediaries in order to move up in the industry (Scott, 2012).

Furthermore, another critical approach that could be taken towards the data is to consider how "people are not only constrained by the events of lived experience, but by the limited repertoire of available and sanctioned stories that they can use to interpret their experience" (Ezzy, 1997, p. 433-434). In this case, it could be argued that the musicians interviewed have adopted language used in neoliberal 'new economy' discourse regarding the benefits of a flexible labour market and the importance of 'pragmatic' economic attitudes, because this is the prevailing discourse available to them (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999/2005; Lee, 2014; McRobbie, 2002a). However, there are unfortunate consequences of this; the acceptance of such a discourse poses the danger of depoliticisation, and encourages workers who do not succeed in this economy to blame themselves for their own failings (McRobbie, 2002a).

However, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) suggest it is important to not totally disregard the positive subjective experiences described by creative workers in research such as this. As they state, “to treat these positive components of creative work as mere sugar-coatings for the bitter pill of precariousness is surely too dismissive of the genuinely positive experiences that some creative workers have in their jobs and careers” (p. 221). It is therefore necessary to take a more nuanced approach to interpreting the data. Ezzy (1997) suggests the hermeneutic theory of narrative identity is a key way through which a researcher can understand whether complex subjective experiences of labour constitutes ‘good work’, as it balances “the disjuncture between structure and agency” that is present in much labour process theory (p. 427). In other words, narrative-identity neither assumes workers are a mere reflection of surrounding cultural discourses, nor does it assume workers actively resist these discourses in a totally autonomous way. Instead, narrative-identity captures how workers have the flexibility to construct multiple stories about what work means to them, but that these stories are nevertheless framed and limited by existing cultural discourses. Such narratives are socially constructed, and are therefore created, spread and reinforced interpersonally within respective communities. In applying narrative-identity to the data at hand, then, it is clear that the musicians have accepted and internalised a number of discourses regarding working-life in the music industry, but that they are also manipulating and reconstructing these discourses in a way that suits them.

An overarching thread that connects a number of these internalised discourses is the presence of the market within the industry. For example, the musicians have all accepted the inherently uncertain nature of the music industry, both in relation to the success of their products’ popularity (Caves, 2000) and in relation the trajectory of their musical careers (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2010, 2011; Cooper & Wills, 1989; Bennet, 2007; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Sternbach, 1995; van den Eynde et al., 2015; Wills & Cooper, 1987; Zwaan et al., 2009). They also have accepted discourses around the importance of entrepreneurialism in the music industry, even if they do not label it as such; for example in regards to the prominence of networking to secure working opportunities (Banks, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Murdock, 2003; Neff et al., 2005; Oakley, 2009; Scott, 2012) and also in relation to the necessity of having both creative and

administrative skills (Bilton, 2010; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Ellmeier, 2003; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2009; Neff et al., 2005; Ryan & Hearn, 2010; Scott, 2012). Of course, the presence of the market in the lives of the musicians is somewhat unsurprising; after all, they are workers in a very well established industry that exists in a wider post-industrial capitalist society (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). Interestingly, however, they are able to accept such market-based discourses at the same time as accepting the negative cultural stigma around the concept of 'selling-out' (Bourdieu, 1980, 1993; Gibson, 2014; McRobbie, 1998; Strand, 2014; Taylor & Littleton, 2008; Tienes, 2015). The way the musicians are able to navigate these two seemingly conflicting discourses seems to be through their manipulation and reconstruction of what it means to be an authentic creative worker (Ezzy, 1997). Although they all express how they are committed to prioritising artistic credibility and skill over financial gain (Bourdieu, 1980; Gibson, 2014), the musicians are nevertheless open to the prospect of making money from their work, therefore debunking the purist distinction de Bruin (2005) draws between the 'artist' and the 'creative entrepreneur'. The musicians' rejection of such narratives instead reinforce the changing nature of what it means to be an authentic musician taking place in the wider global music industry (Hopper, 2013; Klein et al., 2016; Thomson, 2013).

This application of narrative-identity to the musicians' experiences of the labour conditions in the music industry is useful because it reveals a further notion regarding what might constitute 'good work' in the industry. On top of Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011) conception of good work, it could be theorised that the ability to navigate the music market as a cultural entrepreneur whilst still feeling like an authentic musician is a further measure for good work. As Ezzy (1997) suggests, a crucial component of good work is that shared cultural discourses about the work must frame it as being worthwhile. Indeed, this appears to apply to how authenticity is discussed in the data – it is connected with the musicians' intrinsic desires to create work of a high aesthetic quality, which is a commonly identified motivating factor for why people engage in cultural work (Honey, Heron & Jackson, 1997; Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2007; Oakley, 2009). Furthermore, Ezzy (1997) also indicates that good work must give the worker the opportunity to fulfil commitments to other people and to general society. Again, this can be applied to the data, as the musicians describe the importance of communicating their

authenticity as an artist to their followers through social media (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016; Marwick & boyd, 2011). Crucially, these conceptions of authenticity as an artist are coupled with the accepted cultural discourse that it is okay to have entrepreneurial qualities as a musician, and that one is not necessarily a 'sell out' if one is open to making money from one's work (Hopper, 2013; Klein et al., 2016; Thomson, 2013). In other words, it is possible to "maintain a valued and worthwhile sense of self" that is both authentic and entrepreneurial at the same time (Ezzy, 1997, p. 439).

In general, it appears that existing cultural discourses present in the music industry create prototypical characteristics of good work that musicians abide by to validate their creative identities (Macdonald & Wilson, 2005). As Macdonald and Wilson suggest, collectively-held stereotypes help individuals create a narrative about their identities as a worker in a particular field, and this influences the way they behave and think. In the case of the data at hand, this is evident for example in regards to the importance of intrinsic motivation being the guiding force behind creative work (Honey, Heron & Jackson, 1997; Lee, 2007; McRobbie, 2007; Oakley, 2009), and also through their tight-knit relationships with other musicians in the community (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Scott, 2012). Nevertheless, the musicians challenge some conceptions of good work in order to pave out their own understandings of what good work means for them (Bain, 2005). For example, the musicians have manipulated and reconstructed the idea that good work requires stable and regular working conditions in order to avoid feelings of stress and insecurity (Dex et al., 2000; Ertel et al., 2005; McRobbie, 2002a; Rowlands & Handy, 2012; Umney & Kretsos, 2015; van den Eynde et al. 2015) and they have also adapted the concept of what it means to be an authentic musician in the current digitised and competitive music climate, in which it is crucial to adopt entrepreneurial skills in order to survive (Klein et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, although the musicians interviewed evidently have experiences of good work in the New Zealand music industry, such positive experiences may not be felt by all musicians working in the industry. As Huws (2006-7) suggests, by accepting the current working conditions as the norm, creative workers are "either directly or indirectly... constructing new bars for their own cages, or those of

others" (p. 10). In other words, the musicians' reflections on their experiences of the labour conditions in the music industry as being overall positive means that they are complicit in the reinforcement of such conditions, which may not be so positive for other workers. For example, although these musicians appear to be able to manage the uncertainty of the industry without much issue, the same may not apply to all others who work in the industry. Indeed, all of the musicians interviewed have relative mobility in terms of their lifestyles, as none have families to support and they also speak about their openness to potentially living and working overseas. Furthermore, the ability of the musicians interviewed to remain authentic in the industry whilst also acting as entrepreneurs may not be as possible for other workers. For instance, musicians who make music that fits within a smaller niche genre may have a more difficult time finding this balance in a marketplace where cultural intermediaries driven by profit and 'broadcast-outcomes' play an important role (New Zealand On Air, n.d.; Scott, 2012; Zwaan et al., 2009).

Overall, then, this research reveals important findings for those who have the power to structure the way the music industry operates in New Zealand. As the data suggests, the industry provides significant opportunities for musicians to have experiences of good work. However, these experiences may not be felt by other musicians in different circumstances, who may not be able to manage the challenges of the industry as easily as those musicians interviewed. Therefore, as Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) rightly state, it is necessary to consider what steps can be made to make "positive and emancipatory aspects" of creative labour more prevalent, and conversely, how negative aspects of work can be "contained, controlled or even eliminated" (p. 222).

A possible solution to making good creative work more widely accessible in New Zealand could be the renewal of attention towards the Pathways to Arts and Cultural Enterprise (PACE) programme introduced by the Fifth Labour Government in 2001 (Shuker, 2008). In spite of the fact that this programme still technically exists, it has rapidly declined in recent years, with a reduction of those on the programme from 2127 to just 376 between the years of 2003 to 2010 (Fitzsimons, 2011). Although figures are scarce regarding the success of the

programme (Fitzsimons, 2011), and it has been criticised in the past for imposing rigid, market-focused requirements on participants (Scott & Craig, 2012), anecdotal evidence suggests the programme has been vital for a number of different New Zealand creatives in making work, such as filmmaker Taika Waititi and musician Luke Buda (Fitzsimons, 2011; Ministry of Social Development, 2008). The revival of such a programme could be helpful to musicians in circumstances that make them more susceptible to financial insecurity and stress than the musicians interviewed for this research. Such a renewal could also be helpful to musicians who may not qualify for New Zealand On Air's funding requirements, as it could potentially mitigate the powerful gatekeeping functions funding bodies such as New Zealand On Air have over what works get created and what do not. For such a revival to take place, however, a change in government will most likely be required, as the current National-led coalition is largely uninterested in increasing focus on the programme (Williams, 2014) and are more generally determined to significantly reduce numbers of those on welfare ("Nats promise to cut benefit numbers", 2014). Furthermore, it would be necessary for the PACE programme to move beyond the market-logics it is currently constrained by, in order for it to work for musicians that might not naturally have entrepreneurial dispositions (Scott & Craig, 2012).

6.2 Limitations & future directions

Although this research has revealed a number of interesting findings about musicians' experiences of the labour conditions in the New Zealand music industry, the research nevertheless has a number of limitations. One major limitation of this research is that only a very small portion of the overall New Zealand musician community was interviewed, therefore the findings cannot be generalised too broadly. Due to the size of this research, there was obviously not enough scope to significantly increase the number of research participants. However, future research on a bigger scale could certainly address this limitation, as it could include not only a higher number of musicians, but also other workers in the industry, such as New Zealand On Air employees and industry executives. Carrying out research on a bigger scale like this would be useful, as it would garner a wider range of perspectives on the issues addressed in this thesis. Furthermore, another limitation of this research includes the fact that the data was collected in January 2016, which

was prior to the latest changes New Zealand On Air made to their funding scheme (Arnold, 2016). It would be interesting to see through future research whether these changes that have been made to the funding scheme have had a significant impact over the lives of New Zealand musicians, as they were made in order to work more effectively in a digital environment. Additionally, the research stipulations of this thesis has meant that only musicians who have received support from New Zealand On Air were able to qualify as participants. This is a limitation to the research, as it may have painted the funding body in a more positive light than had I interviewed participants who have not been so successful in receiving support.

Conclusion

To conclude, this research has made a small, yet valuable, contribution to the growing body of literature regarding the lived experiences of workers in the creative industries. Developing research of this kind in a New Zealand context is particularly important, as it adds a more holistic understanding to the way the music industry operates in New Zealand. Although a significant amount of public money is given to cultural policy support bodies such as New Zealand On Air to support the industry (New Zealand Music Commission, 2013; Scott & Craig, 2012), there is a dearth of information regarding the lived experiences of the artists they are intending to support. As it stands currently, very little other research has been completed regarding musicians experiences in the New Zealand music industry (Scott, 2012), and most research regarding the local music industry focuses more on the history of the music industry, government policy, and the benefits the music industry provides to audiences and the economy (Bourke, 2010; Dix, 2005; Scott & Craig, 2012; Shuker, 1998, 2008; Shuker & Pickering, 1994; Volkerling, 2010). The research at hand, then, could be of interest to policymakers, as it provides valuable insights into the everyday lives of some New Zealand musicians, and conceptualises how experiences of good work exist in the music industry.

Unfortunately, the likelihood of any change within the industry in the near future is prevented by the agenda among cultural policy groups to advocate for economic imperatives that dominate the logic of the industry (Scott & Craig, 2012).

Nevertheless, this research suggests a change of some kind needs to happen at some

point in the future, in order for opportunities of good work to be made more accessible to a wider range of music workers in New Zealand.

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Appendix 1: Indicative questions

1. Talk me through an overview of your involvement and history in the music industry.
2. I want to hear about your current day-to-day life in the music industry - take me through a 'day-in-the-life-of...'
3. What do you like and dislike about working in the music industry?
4. If anything about the music industry was to make you quit working as a musician, what would that be?
5. Do you feel like New Zealand has a strong music community? Tell me about the extent of your involvement in this community.
6. You've had support from (insert government support body here). Tell me about your experience with (insert government support body here) and whether or not you think the support they provided you was effective.
7. In terms of the wider music community, what role do you think government support bodies such as New Zealand On Air and the New Zealand Music Commission play?
8. How do you see the internet as a tool for musicians?

Appendix 2: Transcript of interview 1

Antony, solo artist based in Mt Maunganui, former member of Pleaseplease.

Ximena: Do you want to talk me through an overview of your involvement and history in the music industry?

Antony: So, I began playing music at highschool, and I think probably what really turned me on to music was both playing at church and kind of the opportunity to just be on stage in that environment all the time, but also in the Rock Quest competition. That was kind of like the landmark every year for pretty much everyone that I've grown up playing music with, whether we were in the same band or not. So doing that every year I think kind of like propelled, I don't know, my initial like involvement in music. And then I studied for a little while, but during that time kind of didn't really do much, but then maybe in the last three or four years I've been involved with PleasePlease, which is an electronic project with another guy from the Mount, so that's been since about mid-2012. Then around the same time I was also involved with another band called Oh Mary, which was me and Luke Thompson and Joe Thompson, and that was kind of like an acoustic, folk project thing. Um, and then just recently, the last like maybe three months I've been doing a solo project. Yeah. Um, is that kind of what that question was?

Ximena: Yeah definitely! So when you said you studied, that was music, right?

Antony: Oh yeah, so I studied a Bachelor of Music at Auckland Uni. I majored in Jazz, and got half way through and then I was pretty much done by that point. And then I won a scholarship to go to the States as well, so I went and did that for a year, and when I came back I was... yeah. Not going back to uni. I think I kind of figured out that music as a career path, if I was going to be a musician, getting the ticket wasn't gunna hold a lot of weight, you know? When it actually came to people listening to my music. Do, you know what I mean?

Ximena: Right, yeah yeah. So you think holding a degree in music wasn't gunna be the thing that got you into the industry?

Antony: Yeah, I don't... I'm not saying I'm writing off tertiary education as a musician, cos I think you've gotta, you know, find the skill set, whatever way it works, you know. Um, but, I think actual, the actual holding of a degree and having that, you know, those letters by your name, as a musician they don't, for the most part, for what I wanted to, they didn't... yeah.

Ximena: Right, so you don't think that was gunna secure you any more employment than if you didn't have it?

Antony: Yeah. Absolutely not.

Ximea: Right, right, I see. Ok. Cool. Um, and then, so at the moment as well you are working as a music teacher?

Antony: Um yeah so I was working in a high school, I just started teaching privately, because like in the high school itinerant scheme if you don't have a degree, like me, um then you're, the rate that you get paid is real low. And you only get paid for the hours that you're teaching, so if, you know, you get paid for ten hours over the two days a week or whatever, you know and then you might be doing lunch times and all that kind of thing, you might be taking five students at a time in some lessons, you know? So I chose to leave that and now I'm just private teaching from home, cos then that way I can kind of make a decent income off of that.

Ximena: Right, and so that private tutoring works around your own work?

[00:04:05.03]Antony: Yeah, my ideal. And people.. yeah. I don't have the degree, I have some sort of qualification, with the Trinity School of Music, but it's not a real teaching qualification. But I think because I've done teaching a lot of... yeah. So I've brought students that have followed me from the school and that kind of thing.

Ximena: And I guess that as a private tutor as well you don't necessarily have to have all of these qualifications to say I'm eligible to teach your kid?

Antony: Absolutely. And in my experience, parents, even students aren't interested... I think they're more interested in if you can actually teach them something. Yeah. That's what I've found.

Ximena: Right. And so you think this arrangement working from home doing this is better than when you were working at a school?

Antony: Hugely more. Like, for me, not having a tertiary qualification, um, yeah that puts just such a low ceiling on the money that you can make. And then when you, so I would be teaching, say I'd be teaching four or five students in half hour allotments throughout the day, and then I'm looking at some friends of mine who do the same work in primary schools, but for every student they have, they're getting paid for those students. So, while I might be making \$20 an hour teaching ten students, they would be making, they could be making \$100 an hour, or \$150 an hour teaching the same amount of students. You know? So once I started to kind of see that, and realise that, ok I need to just go on my own here.

Ximena: Right, and so it's just a smarter way to... smarter move to do more of your own stuff.

Antony: That is right. Because... like if music is something you're trying to do, then you always need the time. You know. And I think it is always taking more time than people assume it would take. You know. Things always take longer than people realise. Um.... and so for me, even though there was a security in working at the school, um, because yeah I could see, I don't know. And as well, I didn't want to be hanging out in that school around the other teachers who potentially wanted to make music, but then ended up kind of going down that road. Yeah.

Ximena: Right.

Antony: I think for me I wanted to... yeah. Not be around that.

Ximena: Right. So you felt like working as a private tutor you could have more flexibility.

Antony: More flexibility, you'd make more money, you have to do less hours, which ultimately for me was the thing. Like I even budgeted on like making the same amount money I was making at the high school but just for a fraction of the time. So I get all of that time back.

Ximena: Right. But you said there was more security with the school work? So there's like more risk not doing that?

[00:07:01.11]Antony: Yeah, that's right, yeah. Yeah, it's a little more risky, cos there's no guarantees. At the school, you're still getting paid. If none of your students show up the whole day, you're still getting paid. You don't have to chase any parents either. You're just, yeah.

Ximena: Right, so there's kind of more of that admin work for you now that you're doing your own tutoring?

Antony: Bit more admin, yeah. But again, way more freedom. The ceiling goes way higher, you know, you can kind of take it as far... as you want.

Ximena: Totally. Cool. Um, so what about... I want to hear about your current day-to-day life in the music industry. So what would a typical week in the life of Ants be in regards to all of your music related activity?

[00:07:48.24]Antony: Well, so, I'm you know currently involved with Mosaic pretty heavily. And Mosaic, as far as churches go, has a huge, you know, culture around music and songwriting and that kind of thing. So, I do a bit of stuff there, and so that would be Thursday nights I run the music for the youth ministry and then Sundays, pretty much all day we're um like part of what's happening on Sundays. So that would be three gatherings over the course of a Sunday. But then beyond that, most of, what I'm doing at the moment is really writing and producing at

home. Um, which looks like, I find I work best in the mornings, so I get up about half six, and then I'm generally, on writing days working on songs by about 7.30, you know. And then just working on songs, writing, um, and I generally try to keep those hours just for the creative outlet. You know, just like, like working on the songs themselves, like the lyrics, the parts, um, and then generally about 11/11.30 that starts to wane, the creative juices, so I generally take a bit of a break then. And when I come back after lunch, or you know we might go off for a walk up the Mount or something, I come back after lunch, and it would be just into more the production side of things. Which, for me, like, I'm very much just in like a kind of developmental phase of learning that stuff. Because, which is a whole other tangent we can go down, because I want to be able to produce everything, you know? It's just too expensive otherwise to like... outsource that. When, you know, you could, yeah. If you have the ability to do it all yourself, then like, and you're buying gear, then the price of that gear, which in a lot of cases, really similar to the price of going to a big studio. Like it... amortise, is that the word? Gets more amortised like pretty quick.

Ximena: Oh right yeah I see.

Antony: Yeah, so um, anyway for me at the moment that's sort of like my afternoons, just going through my mixes and yeah.

Ximena: Right, doing kind of the less creative...

Antony: Yeah, more just like the shining...

Ximena: Nuts and bolts, type of...

Antony: Yeah.

Ximena: Right, of getting that work done.

[00:10:15.10] Antony: Yeah. And then, at the moment, I you know, have got a lot of shows on, so for the last, yeah, like this week I've had last night in the Mount,

tonight in Auckland, tomorrow night in the Mount. So there's been a lot of planning as well.

Ximena: Right. Cool cool cool. And so you feel like when you're doing that structure, that works really well for you? Do you feel like you can turn on your creativity, you know at 7.30 everyday? Or that's kind of...

Antony: For me, I think it is that simple. Like I... I mean I don't have like fifteen years of experience or anything, you know. But I... Yeah for me it works that way. If I'm up and I'm... I don't know. Our space is really nice for working, so there's generally. Yeah.

Ximena: Right. Cos you have a studio upstairs?

Antony: Upstairs. Yup.

Ximena: And then those music lessons fit in after school?

Antony: Yeah yeah.

Ximena: Right. Cool. So what do you like and dislike about working in the music industry? So you can start with things that you like maybe.

[00:11:23.28]Antony: I like that... um... like I think what I like about music is that it's generous, I feel. Like it's uh... it's like a... you spend your time making this gift for people. You know? Like I hope I'm explaining this well. But I like that about music, and that it's um... you know within that there's a whole lot of freedom, it's very expressive, um, and it gives you a place. So I think yeah there's both sides to it. It gives you a place where you can kind of express whatever it is that you feel to express, you know. Or that you um whatever the story you wanna tell, or bandwagon you want to jump on and propel. Um, and I think uhhh... for me I like that it's tactile, and you can, you know, hit it, grapple with it kind of thing. Um... but yeah and I just think I like what it gives people. So like I believe in music. Ummm.. but the things that I suppose are hard about music is I think music more

than any other art form has this horrible like version of itself that people kind of deem to be the only way to really succeed in it, you know? And that for me has always been kind of a bit of a punish, cos I, I don't see that for me personally as something that I even really want. Um. That isn't the... the motivating factor for me. To be really really famous and well-known everywhere. But I would like to be able to make enough money, you know, to not have to teach. That would be really cool. But um... And so I think that whole sort of... yeah. I mean you're playing the game, you know. You're not climbing the ladder. It's like, yeah. It's not so much like $A+B=C$, it's like...

Ximena: Right, not kind of like a corporate ladder that you might have if you decided to be an accountant.

[00:13:34.21] Antony: Yeah. If you decided to, like, I feel like I'm not even that great at maths, but I feel like... maybe that's a bad example, but I feel like there are so many career paths that I could just be like, man if I did just follow those steps, I could, you know, be able to pay my mortgage, or whatever. Like, put my kids through school or whatever. But music you're kind of like... well I hope this... you know. Yeah I'm going to do my best and try and be wise and make good financial decisions or whatever, you know, and take the right opportunities. So there's always both sides to that coin.

Ximena: Yeah. And so that ideal that you were talking about, what do you think that is driven by?

[00:14:17.14] Antony: Like, to... the, um...

Ximena: You said that everyone kind aspires to this very rigid narrow sort of ideal of...

Antony: Of what a musician should be, like... yeah. Uhh... what do I think that's driven by?

Ximena: Yeah.

Antony: Ummmm.

Ximena: Like do you think it's a commercial driver that creates that, or it's more a bit more what you said about fame, or..?

Antony: Yeah I think it's probably both of those things. I think it feels even more perpetuated now by silly talent shows that kind of like... yeah. But I don't know.

Ximena: Like this rock star type of...?

Antony: Yeah yeah X-Factor or whatever. Like... [laughs]. You know. But. But I think.... Ummmm. Yeah I don't know. And I suppose it wouldn't be true for every person. You know. that that's what they perceive as like success in music. But I just think it's uhh yeah maybe just a general mentality that you sort of bump into a lot.

Ximena: Right. This pop star ideal type of...

[00:15:28.02] Antony: Yeah, pop-star ideal, or you know. Selling out stadiums as being like the dream.

Ximena: Right right. Where you see there's so much more about a music career than just that?

Antony: Yeah, yeah. And I mean I think really, like, the things I aspire to as a musician are... you know, is to write a really great song. You know, or to... play really really well and for people to really engage with... you know. However many people there are or whatever. Do you know what I mean? Um. Yeah.

Ximena: But then... but what are those... How do you, like, how do you gauge that? You know, what's a really great song? Like for you personally?

[00:16:12.18] Antony: Hmm. It's probably pretty subjective, you know. And I think um yeah... yeah I don't know maybe the ideal is to derive satisfaction from the

work, you know, and to really enjoy what I'm doing, and be able to pay my bills, you know. But like for me I'd be happy to do that... I don't know. And I think that's what's interesting like and we'll probably get into it like the most success I've ever had with music hasn't been off the stuff that I'm most proud of. Which is.... kind of. Yeah. That's a revelation for me right there. [laughs].

Ximena: There we go! That's what the research is about.

Antony: Financially speaking anyway, you know.

Ximena: Right, yup yup.

Antony: And in terms of, like, notoriety or whatever.

Ximena: Right, so you think that, that stuff is probably more commercially successful, but in your eyes it's not...

Antony: It's not so personally gratifying.

Ximena: Yup, yup, right. So even if the, you know, you're getting stuff in your bank account, it's not like...

[00:17:19.14]Antony: Well, yeah. But I mean I'm not so... I don't have my head so far up my ass that I'm like, you know, like, woe is me, [laughs], you know? Like... I feel incredibly privileged for what I've been able to make out of those endeavours, for sure, 100%. But it's just so funny to me, how the music that I really strive to create often isn't going to be the music I know that will pay the bills. Which is fine, you know.

Ximena: So, by saying that the music that you know will pay the bills, you feel like there's kind of more of a formula to that commercial success? That's easier to figure out in a way? Or...?

Antony: Well, I think there's money to be made in music if you follow your nose. If you follow, if you sniff it out kind of thing.

Ximena: Right, okay.

[00:18:16.06] Antony: Umm... and I'm not speaking strictly as like, I'm in a band and I play songs, like I'm speaking like, I produce my music at home, and I also write for TV ads on the side, or I, you know, put music up for people to download and put on their web videos, or whatever, you know. Like I think there's always money to be made that way. Um... yeah, again I feel like I'm maybe chasing different rabbits.

Ximena: Wait, so you mean, so there's a kind of a guaranteed financial security in music by doing those, you know, making music for commercials?

Antony: Yeah. I don't think there's... there's probably never a guarantee, but there's always... you can always kind of hedge your bets and make something happen I reckon.

Ximena: Right, rather than being, making something that you're really feeling like is sort of more...

Antony: Totally. But isn't that kind of, I don't know, like I think that that's very clearly to me the two sides of the coin. But that there's always gonna be side that you just do because you feel in your heart and soul to do it, and then there's always going to be the side that you do because you need to... pay the bills, and put the food on the table. Or, you aspire to have a nice big house, or whatever. And so I feel like for some musicians, that might be just making their entire musical world about being this sort of corporate, or you know, pop icon, or whatever. For some musicians, that might be... I teach, you know, five hours a week and that pays all of my bills, and then that allows me the rest of the time to just follow my creative instinct. For some musicians, that might be I write music for ads or whatever. And then the rest of.. does that kind of make sense?

[00:20:04.08] Ximena: Yeah. Definitely. And so, do you feel though that making work commercially sometimes maybe if you feel slightly financially insecure for whatever reason that there is that pressure to... that it impinges on your work? Or you feel like you can kind of compartmentalise your own stuff that you don't care about commercially, and your maybe more commercially driven music?

Antony: I think the lines are generally pretty blurry. Um... But as I'm getting older, I'm far more inclined to compartmentalise. Like even recently there was a time where I'd decided I wasn't going to do any covers gigs. Cos they're great, you go play at someone's wedding and they give you 400 bucks, like that's awesome. But it's still kind of banal, horrible work, being like a wedding singer, you know. Like that's just... not the greatest thought. Umm. But for me, like now when I'm looking at, you know, my week, I think I'm just thinking a lot more pragmatically about it. And so I can compartmentalise that and go, I'm going to do that, because if I go play at that wedding, then I can go buy that new microphone I want, or I can, whatever. Or that that's going to allow me that much more time to keep following my creative instinct. Cos I think ultimately the dream would be to not have to do that, you know? And to just follow your creative thing all the time. And like I'm sure there are musicians out there that get to do that.

[00:21:44.25] Ximena: But I guess you've got to take that work to be able to get there.

Antony: Yeah, you've gotta... there's.... sure, there's like all the creative, ah life -

Ximena: Don't want to sell out -

Antony: Yeah don't want to sell out. But then at the same time, life is very practical, you know.

Ximena: Yeah. Still gotta put the food on the table.

Antony: Yeah and so it's like up to you, like do you wanna maybe starve this week and not play a wedding, or do you want to just go play the wedding and like... kind of have that liberty the rest of the time.

[00:22:14.23]Ximena: Right. So you think like maybe when you were younger, you'd think 'oh I don't want to do that wedding or whatever um because I feel like it's selling out' and it's....

Antony: Yeah and also cos I think I wanted to be above it. Like, I think when PleasePlease really first started to hum, you know, and we were... ummm... our royalty cheques were getting bigger and um and I think... yeah it's stuff like that that was happening and we were getting paid more for our shows, like, suddenly that was beneath me. Well, I wanted it to be beneath me. It probably wasn't cos I was still super poor at the time [laughs].

Ximena: Right but I guess that the work with PleasePlease... you know it still fluctuates though, right?

Antony: Yeah, totally. And in a lot of ways we kind of ran out of steam with the project. Or I really ran out of steam with it. So like it ... yeah. It wasn't enough to kind of keep going up, you know?

Ximena: Why do you think you ran out of steam with PleasePlease?

Antony: Ummm I think because it, it started as, you know... just as a curiosity, with a style of music that I wasn't really familiar with. And ummm and that curiosity kind of developed into some songs, and you know, then they actually... one in particular did really well. Well, did better than anything I'd ever made before. And so we kind of just rode that wave from then on. Like 'this thing is going great', like we were playing shows and people were coming, and getting to do things that I hadn't done before. And so I think it was just kind of a matter of like yeah enjoying the ride. But then for whatever reason....

Ximena: So you feel like with that you kind of struck this weirdly successful thing in a style that you didn't personally...

Antony: That I didn't fully believe in, yeah. I think that's a really good way to put it.

[00:24:09.04]Ximena: Right, cool. Ok.

Antony: But it was a good thing, you know. Like, and I still look back like 'man that was awesome!' It was a lot of fun.

Ximena: It was valuable, you weren't -

Antony: Yeah and to be honest I still listen, like when I listen to the songs, I'm not like 'ugh'. I'm like 'this is cool!' I liked what it was, it was a cool time in my life. But it was.... but I didn't think it was ever going to be this big, career that I... like I'd rather that big career, if, even in just in terms of the way it would consume my world and my life, I'd rather that be maybe what I'm doing now.

Ximena: Right. So you feel kind of maybe more creatively passionate or connected to that other work that you're doing.

[00:24:51.19]Antony: Yeah absolutely. And to the stuff I do at church, and so I think those... yeah.

Ximena: And so the distinction between the work you do at church and your own creative work is that... so... sorry just to ask more about the work at church, that's just kind of facilitating a community?

Antony: In some ways. Yeah. Um, and I mean in church the endeavours are always entirely different, you don't go into that for... well you shouldn't go into that... to succeed in the same way you do on your own, in your own music. The music serves an entirely different purpose. Um, but within that there's a lot of writing, and um you know, more, for me, producing. Yeah. So...

Ximena: So that's sort of like worship songs?

Antony: Yup! Big time. Yeah. That's right. So worship songs, ummm yeah. You're writing songs to engage the community in a... yeah. Into worship.

Ximena: Right. And so you feel like maybe so with the church stuff, your own stuff, and PleasePlease stuff, PleasePlease stuff is maybe the more commercial work, and then the other two are the things that you have maybe less commercial....

Antony: Absolutely. Yeah. Comparatively.

Ximena: Yeah, but that there's more of that... love and passion for you.

Antony: Yeah. And so ultimately, like I think time-wise, when push came to shove, it was like, well these two things get it.

Ximena: Yeah, right. And then kind of finding something else for maybe that financial security, instead of PleasePlease work?

Antony: Yeah, totally. Mmmm.

Ximena: So do you feel that... I don't know, is there still like, an irregularity around your current music situation? Or it's pretty reliable at this point?

[00:26:50.21] Antony: No, it's definitely pretty irregular. Yeah. Um... And, I think, cos generally in my life I'm juggling a couple of things at the same time, so... ummm. Like I mean I'd love to be working on an EP right now for my own stuff, but the time that I can afford to give my music, that project anyway, like, I'd like book a bunch of shows, you know. Like even today being in Auckland, like, I'm not at home working on the music, so. You know, like that's kind of what's taken the main focus. Um, but that will chop and change, and even as work fluctuates, and yeah. Like, to be honest, I think I'd like for it to be more regular, and I'd like to be able to just have that time consistently. You know. But um, yeah.

Ximena: Do you feel like with that schedule though, do you feel a bit of isolation as well though, with the...

Antony: How do you mean?

Ximena: So with your work, you're working pretty solidly doing it mostly by yourself? Or are you working with other people?

Antony: Yeah, generally working by myself. Um... But then I think because I'm with Mosaic, all of that writing that's happening is happening pretty much collaboratively. And so that definitely is cool. And then there's other musicians doing what I'm doing in the Mount, who I catch up with. Like even Ryan from PleasePlease, like he's still doing the same thing, he's still... teaching part-time, showing up to do church stuff, and you know doing his own thing, making his own music. And there's a couple of other guys um yeah. And so yeah sometimes we work together or like kind of yeah help each other out.

[00:28:54.09] Ximena: So it's kind of almost nice to have that balance between doing your own thing but working together with other people as well?

Antony: Yeah I think so.

Ximena: Cool. Umm.... And so if you think anything would make you want to just stop working in the music industry entirely, what would that be? Like any of the above that we just talked about?

Antony: I think.... like I mean.... if all I could ever do was live in New Zealand, then I might consider just jumping in 100% at church or something. And then maybe not pursuing music. Or doing it in a totally different way. I don't think I could ever give it up completely, but like.. I just think in terms of pursuing a career, the ceiling is so low in New Zealand. And there's only so... there's only a couple of spaces for people to... And most of those spaces are filled with barbecue reggae. So like, if that's not your thing, which for me it isn't, like if I could never get out of New Zealand, then that would be... yeah.

Ximena: Right, you might feel -

[00:30:11.17]Antony: I might feel like 'Ohh I can't see this really working', you know?

Ximena: Right, because of the kind of small....

Antony: The smallness of it, yeah. And... yeah. Pretty much.

Ximena: And so that's why you're hoping to... you're wanting pursue it more overseas?

Antony: Yeah, and just even chatting with friends who are heading out as well, or you know who have already gone out, or are planning on going away or whatever, like the more I see that as being the only viable way of really making it happen.

Ximena: Right, and so you think that's more likely in the US?

Antony: Yeah the US or Europe. But we just have such a tiny, you know, music economy. Comparative to some of those other countries. For us, it's the US cos you know that's where... um yeah.

Ximena: Yeah and I guess that's what makes the most sense because of...

Antony: Family ties and that stuff. But um...

Ximena: And so how is that different, how is your prospects there different, just because of the size of the industry?

[00:31:22.26]Antony: Yeah like I mean what's cool about right now where we live, and the reason we live in the Mount and not in Auckland is because we can afford to work our part-time jobs and do a little bit of teaching and all that kind of thing and still have enough time in our work to actually pursue creative endeavours. Um and so that means, I can just work and work and work. Everyday I can get up and everyday that I have I can get up and write music, which is great. But when it comes to actually touring and performing, like, I could, probably spend two weeks

travelling both islands and then I'd have to give it another twelve months before I could do that again, you know? And um even in doing that it doesn't really bear that much fruit. Unless we get...

Ximena: Because of the population size?

Antony: Because of the population, yeah. Um, and so again it's something you do more for.... because that's part of what you love doing. Rather than like, if I do this it's gonna help pay my bills or whatever. Or equate to this many more people engaging with who I am as a musician, you know? But over there - you know, you could just, especially in a country like the States, you could tour non-stop. You know, you could tour, you could play every night of the year and you could just keep going.

Ximena: Right [laughs]

Antony: Forever! [laughs]

Ximena: Right cos I guess there's... it's easy to move around to a new place where there's so many more people who've... yeah.

[00:33:02.06]Antony: Totally. And I think it's partly that, but maybe even an attitude, you know? Like here that it's like... I don't know. There's definitely an attitude in the Mount around live music....

Ximena: And what's that attitude?

Antony: I.... I think people just... people aren't chomping at the bit to go to a gig, unless it's uh. I don't know. Unless it's a certain kind of gig.

Ximena: So you think there's just more in live music, there's just more opportunities and it happens more in the US and more audiences?

[00:33:35.16] Antony: As far as I can see. And same in Europe, I've just had some friends come back from touring Europe for the last 8 months, and you know they haven't been touring glamorously, they've been staying on couches, playing house shows, and Sofar shows, and busking, but they've been incredibly productive. And that to me is what's really exciting, is they're going over, doing the work, and seeing fruit from the work that they're doing. And they're managing to save over there, which is... awesome. But you just can't do that here. As far as I see it.

Ximena: So you don't think though that you could stay here and make music and then do tours there? You think you have to kind of be based there to be able to get that?

Antony: You at least have to spend a good amount of time establishing something.

Ximena: Or else people will be like... won't even know.

Antony: Yeah. Otherwise it's too hard. I mean there's... my feeling about it is that for wherever you're trying to get established, there's a certain amount of time that you've just got to keep feeding it, you know, and keep just working, producing, pushing it in that locale for it... I mean maybe not even in that locale. But just in general for it to like get to a point where it can kind of rest without you pushing, and then you could take a bit of time and then come back to it kind of thing. So I really feel like, say it was Germany, and you were like 'man I like Germany so I'm gunna go there and do it', but like I think you'd have to spend a good amount of time there first for it to bear fruit.

[00:35:19.15]Ximena: Right, to make a bit more awareness about yourself as a musician amongst...

Antony: Yeah I guess so yeah.... yeah. And obviously with the internet, everything is changing as well, you know. And I think there's kind of that, yeah and things happen for people by that. I mean look at Lorde. And that's really awesome, for sure. But again, if that's the only way you're playing the game, then like yeah. I dunno, for me I just don't want to do that, I don't want to just put it up and leave it

up to chance and hope for the best, like I'd rather actually.... and because I wanna do it, and I wanna go and play.

Ximena: Right, right. So you feel like, wait - so to backtrack a little bit with Lorde and the internet, you mean like she kind of just.. what do you mean? By putting it up to chance?

[00:36:11.14]Antony: Oh, like I think, well she made an EP, and she put it online, and obviously there were all sorts of factors at play there, but in reality, as far as I know the story, there wasn't much more than that.

Ximena: It was luck, is that kinda what you mean?

Antony: I mean well... I don't want to call it luck. Because I think.... I don't know, it seemed like a lot of people all over the world have a really strong connection to what she was making, you know, and I don't think you can purely put that down just to luck, but um, but you know, like that took her, just that, amongst other things, took her to an incredible place. Um.

Ximena: Kind of unseen before, pre-internet?

Antony: Yeah like there's no way that could happen without the internet. You know. Like, and so that's what's awesome about the internet. It like opens up doors for people all over the world to engage with what you're doing in little old New Zealand. But, in terms of, like I would never be satisfied in just like doing that. You know, putting my music online and kind of going, 'alright! Let's hope this works out!' You know? And I think there's two sides to that, partly because I enjoy playing music and travelling... that would be hugely rewarding, but also... I also don't wanna just throw it into the ether and hope for the best. Like I'd rather... there is stuff that I can control, you know, like the stuff that I can... work that I can do that can guarantee an outcome to some degree.

[00:37:54.19] Ximena: Right, ok. So by that, you mean the work...?

Antony: Yeah. Like touring, and even just producing more music and putting it out, or feeding your social media, or...

Ximena: Right. So you think doing those sorts of measures is a, I don't know, rather than just putting it online and seeing what happens and hoping that it will come together, you kind of want to have more of an active role in like building that.

Antony: Yeah, totally. And pushing it forward and yeah.

Ximena: Right I guess yeah cos I guess with Lorde, it was kind of this viral thing that happened that she didn't necessarily have a big role in creating it just kind of happened with people sharing it.

Antony: Absolutely. And I think that's great. And I don't at all want to detract from that. But I'm not going to put myself in a position where I you know think that's going to happen to me and leave it up to chance.

[00:38:50.21]Ximena: Right, right. You kind of want to build it in a more active way.

Antony: Absolutely.

Ximena: Cool. Um, and so you mentioned a little bit before about the community at the Mount, so do you think, so you feel like the Mount has a pretty strong music community?

Antony: Uhhhh, I feel like I exist within a cool little community, I wouldn't say that it's big or strong or like something someone could try and break into, and not to say that people wouldn't be welcoming, but I mean it's not like a dominant thing in the Mount. I have, I feel like I just have a circle of friends there that are doing things that I'm relatively excited about, and for me at the moment like I say I'm sort of learning a lot more with the production, with producing music and recording and that kind of thing. And so I have... there's people around me that are...

Ximena: That are helping you?

Antony: Yeah doing that and teaching me things....

Ximena: Cool. Ok.

Antony: Well them and the internet. [laughs]

Ximena: The internet, Youtube tutorials?

Antony: Youtube tutorials.

Ximena: And what about the wider New Zealand music community, do you feel like you have any, much involvement with that? Or it's mostly you in your small circle in the Mount?

[00:40:03.06] Antony: Hmmm at the moment it feels very much like me and my small circle in the Mount. But, maybe that's.... ohh it wasn't so much, with PleasePlease we had some cool partners and friends, and we were with a management company that were uhh... kind of... opened doors for us, to exist in a... but now that I'm on my own, it's yeah. And i think also because my projects are pretty new. Like I haven't really broken into any of those circles yet. Which is... at the moment isn't really a priority, you know? Yeah. I think I'm probably in an interesting spot, if we chatted a year from now it might be different.

Ximena: Right, so you're still kind of building that, you know, your own brand rather than trying to...

Antony: I'm not yet at the point where I'm like ready to hit the ground running like that.

Ximena: Right, you're still kind of happy at this....

Antony: Happy where I am, yeah. Enjoying just kind of the work itself, you know...

Ximena: Establishing that before you try to get more into that New Zealand music network I suppose?

Antony: Yeah, definitely. But to be honest, part of, like, if I never existed in that world, I wouldn't care. Like, that's not really where my sights are set in terms of what I want to do, like because what I alluded to before, like I yeah, I would quite happily never be in that thing, you know?

[00:41:33.24] Ximena: Right.... if it means you have to compromise your own thing, you'd prefer to just stay out of it?

Antony: Or, no, I just... that... it isn't an ambition of mine... Um. I'd rather... Once I feel like I'm at that point where I'm ready to hit the ground running, I'll... you know, depending on where everything is at in terms of life in general, like I'll probably jet and go overseas. That's sort of what I mean by that, I'd rather sink that effort somewhere in a bigger pool.

Ximena: Right, yeah definitely. Um, so but do you think New Zealand does have a strong music community? That maybe you're not so involved with, but do you think it exists?

Antony: Yeah I think I can see that, yeah. And I think there are, there are..... people doing cool things all over the place, you know. And yeah. Yeah no I get the feeling there is. And cos there's a small, and even with the stuff, the time that I was doing with PleasePlease, not that I was like 'mister networking' and meeting everybody, but I could see similar faces at different places, different festivals. You'd see the same sort of people, or you know, like....

Ximena: You mean the same sort of people behind the scenes and the same artists?

[00:42:54.13] Antony: Yeah, and the same artists. And I thought that was kind of cool. Like yeah, you play one night at uh Rhythm and Vines or something, and it will be the same tech guys at the Big Day Out or whatever. I don't know... I thought it was kind of... pretty neat.

Ximena: So it was this kind of... friendly network of faces that you would see again and again?

Antony: Yeah I suppose so. Yeah. Um. But again, like I don't think we were ever in there long enough or you know really intent enough on trying to kind of break into it.

Ximena: Right. So you... did you feel, maybe not, but did you feel that if you wanted to there was like that pressure to network if you wanted to break more into it, that there was pressure to network with important people in the industry?

[00:43:50.17] Antony: If there was, I would never have felt that. Ryan, at that point in time with that project was definitely way more, had a lot more of the ownership of it, you know? And I think... so he might have. But I was very much just like along for the ride, kinda like 'whatever!'. And I know, I definitely have friends who would be about that, you know. Like trying to network.

Ximena: Right. But you were kind of not involved, you let Ryan do the social side?

Antony: Definitely. If he wanted to do that, then that was his prerogative. But I was kind of like, 'yeah I'm happy hanging out', like yeah.

Ximena: So, but do you feel like there are those kind of people creating these instrumental relationships in the industry, maybe that you've not had involvement with?

Antony: Uh yeah I think so. Yeah there's gotta be. And the more that I think about it, like we, because PleasePlease had management, that meant we got all the benefits of our manager's network. And in that regard, what am I talking about. She was like deep in it. She was.. is right in the thick of that industry. Knew a lot people and everything that was going on, and um and all of that, but I, yeah.

[00:45:24.05] Ximena: So I guess just having that relationship....

Antony: That opened a lot of doors.

Ximena: And that kind of took the pressure off you to do that.

Antony: So I had... yeah. I take back what I said before. I had nothing to do with it, but it was happening on my behalf.

Ximena: Right. And you were like...

Antony: And I was benefitting from that for sure. Absolutely. Hugely benefitting. Like I don't think anything would have probably happened with that band if it hadn't been for what Teresa was able to do, what our manager was able to do.

Ximena: Yeah, so she kind of had those relationships that existed that she could just take advantage of for...

Antony: Yeah in a big way. Totally.

[00:46:01.18]Ximena: Um, so onto the New Zealand On Air stuff, so you've had some like support with them, so do you want to tell me a bit about your experience with New Zealand On Air?

Antony: So, we, they put us on the Decent Exposure thing for Channel 4...

Ximena: So that was just a little video...

Antony: It was like a little video interview that they did with our band, and they'd play it before and after our music video. Um on Channel 4, C4. And so that was cool. And then we featured on the Hit Disk a couple of times I think, yeah. Um. But apart from that, as far as I can remember, I'm pretty sure that's as far as it goes. That was kind of the extent of it.

Ximena: Right, the PleasePlease stuff. And also I remember seeing some stuff on The Audience.

Antony: Oh yup. Definitely. Yeah. So... and.... I can't remember if PleasePlease was on the Audience?

Ximena: Yup! [laughs]

[00:47:13.02] Antony: Oh Mary was on The Audience as well. And I think one month we really tried to get that funding, cos they...

Ximena: For Oh Mary?

Antony: Yeah for The Audience, and we had like all our friends vote -

Ximena: Oh the monthly thing -

Antony: Yeah I don't know if they still do that. But, um, but we didn't get it [laughs].

Ximena: Right, you sort of hustled your...

Antony: Yeah, we hustled, but then, and then we got to the point where like, and I think we kind of tried a little bit one month, and it actually you know went ok. And so we were like 'oh! Let's really give this a go!' And then we tried really really hard, and haggled all our friends for a month, and then didn't quite get it. And at that point we were kind of like 'ohh'. We were going to turn into the Avon friend [laughs]. 'Vote for my song!'

Ximena: Right so I guess that kind of almost relates to the network thing as well, it's not just the industry network, but also your support network, and you kind of have to manage that in the right way.

[00:48:09.21]Antony: Totally. Definitely in the right way. Nobody wants that showing up on their wall everyday, on their Facebook feed or whatever.

Ximena. Right. But I guess that's kind of part of the expectation of The Audience, that directly serves their benefits of people being like 'vote for us on The Audience!' And then that gives.... that's what they want you to do, but obviously there's like an extent to which you feel comfortable.

Antony: Totally. Yeah.

Ximena: Yeah. Cos they're still people that, you know, most of who are Facebook friends, or whatever, right?

Antony: Yeah, that's right.

Ximena: Ummm, and so, New Zealand On Air with your own music as well, so like is that like mostly funding applications?

Antony: So I've never applied for any of my solo music, Oh Mary applied maybe once or twice, I can't remember. Um, PleasePlease definitely applied a bunch of times. And never once got funding. Which always kind of... yeah. I don't know. It really bothered me. Because I felt like we were... The cool thing is looking back, we self-funded everything. So all of our music we paid for ourselves, and all of the opportunities came off the back of just real life contacts, and in all of the... Yeah, like, 'The Sun Is Up Now' got a really big sync on a Pump ad, you know? Which, in my mind, equated to you know a grant in some ways. All of a sudden we could get our EP mixed by someone way better than we could have booked before or whatever. But yeah we paid for everything ourselves.

[00:50:06.27]Ximena: Right. And so why do you think NZOA supported you in the other ways, but then didn't really help with the funding?

Antony: I don't really know. And I think, cos as far as I'm aware, the way it works is they submit all the songs to a panel and then that panel basically determines um

you know who gets funding and who doesn't. And so, I suppose if that's the case, then we rolled the dice a bunch of times and it never turned in our favour, I don't know. Um. Yeah. I.... I'm not sure, I don't know. And I try not to think about it too much, cos then I start getting really annoyed. Cos you start getting annoyed when you see the funding decisions, and you see bands or artists that like clearly don't need an extra \$8000 or whatever to record their new single. And then you see bands, or music that you're going like, '1. Who is this person, and 2. Who is listening to this?'. Or you see like the... yeah. I don't know. I think I just felt like that... that scheme was set-up for artists like us who like... were doing things, were working really hard, and making things happen themselves, and could have really benefitted from that extra cash, but uhh yeah.

Ximena: That was Making Tracks that you applied for?

Antony: Yeah. I think that's what it's called.

Ximena: Yeah, the \$10,000 grant.

Antony: Yeah. And I think we always applied for the \$10,000 one, maybe one time we applied for a video one only. But... um yeah. I can't remember how many times all up we would have applied. Maybe four or five, maybe way more. I don't know.

Ximena: Yeah. Cos I guess there's pressure with the Making Tracks that there, that it's intended for 'broadcasting outcomes' as in, you know, we are doing this because we think that this will get plays on Youtube. Which I feel like...

Antony: Yeah. And I think that's always what kind of like baffled me about it. Was cos we were getting plays, you know? We were getting a lot of radio, we were getting the views on Youtube and Spotify and all that kind of thing. Uh, but yeah. It just never, yeah. It never happened for us. But then... I think it's probably.. I'm starting to paint a bit of a picture about the way I think at the moment. Like, what I didn't like about it was it meant we'd give over control, or, you know, we'd let that determine whether or not we were going to make something or not. You know?

Ximena: Oh ok.

[00:52:56.04]Antony: Do you know what I mean? Like.. from time to time. Not always. It got to the point where we were just like, 'screw this, we're just going to make it, we're just going to get a mix, we're just going to pay for it ourselves'. But it had been time and time again of like, 'oh we'll just apply again next month and then if we get the funding then we'll mix the EP or get that song done'.

Ximena: So you saw it as... kind of almost this sign of legitimacy of what you were doing, that people deemed it as a good thing or whatever, and so that...

Antony: Yeah. I think so. But that... Now I'm starting to get really personal I guess. But definitely for our manager, she did. I had the self-efficacy to just be like 'this is great', I feel like I did, you know. And I feel like Ryan definitely did. He's very self-assured. Like to believe in the song, whether we were getting funding or not. Whether six people sitting around a table thought it was good compared to these other songs.

Ximena: But Teresa was like ok...

Antony: Yeah she very much was like, this is... that's an indication. And I think because... she's been in the industry a long time and she... as far as I'm aware, wouldn't have had bands not get funding. Yeah. Which was... I think the scheme was different a little while ago. Kind of lended itself more to who you know rather than what you were making... As far as I know, that's kind of...

[00:54:26.24]Ximena: So you think bands maybe more with connections and... more contacts with New Zealand on Air might have....

Antony: I think at least for a time? Definitely not now though, because we had an epic connection, and we never got funding. So, it kind of flies in the face of that theory.

Ximena: Yeah, a lot of the logic behind how it..

Antony: Yeah. I have no idea. Really, like...

Ximena: Yeah. Cos also don't you also have to have these quantifiable things that you can show them right?

Antony: Absolutely. They have a criteria.

Ximena: Yeah. Like a thousand Facebook followers -

Antony: Or plays on this. Yeah. Which always kind of cracked me up cos like, you need 2000 plays on a Youtube video or something, and we were getting like over 100,000 plays on our Youtube video. But that didn't mean more chances, you know?

[00:55:21.14]Ximena: Right, yeah that's super interesting. Um, well so do you think that in terms of the wider music community, what role do you think that these government support bodies play, New Zealand On Air and New Zealand Music Commission? And do you think, I guess you'd probably feel differently from your personal experiences with it, but do you think that they're effective?

Antony: You know what... I really think I'd probably feel entirely differently about it if like one of those times we'd got funding, you know? And so all of that being said, like, and I don't... I'm not sure for me personally if I want to... and this is something I wrestle with now going into a solo project, I'm not sure if I'd want to give over that to them to... let them say yay or nay. Cos I'm scared of maybe what that might do to my ability to determine and discern what songs I like of mine and what I don't. Um, in saying all of that, I love that our country and our government supports it. I think it's really cool, I think it's really unique, and I hope it um does good things for our musicians. I really do. I think there's.. yeah. There's always going to become that point where you own it yourself and you're going to do it whether or not you received some sort of funding. But I do think it's a... really cool thing.

Ximena: Just that it exists, really? Because in other places there's no government support.

Antony: Yeah, totally, it doesn't exist you know, and yeah. I think it is pretty cool. It's interesting, it holds an interesting place in our music industry. Like I remember being a kid and always wondering what that little logo thing was that appeared on the end of all the videos [laughs]. So I mean it definitely holds an interesting place in our industry. Actually yeah I think it is really cool, as far as I can tell. Like I think... if that's the case, for me as... looking back at it like that, as a kid I was aware that there was like.... things being made because the government helped to make it happen, I think it's really really cool. And you wonder if that it never happened, what our music scene might look like, you know?

[00:57:58.08]Ximena: And then I guess, and also, not just the funding aspect as well, looking at the promotional aspect as well, so I suppose you did receive some benefits from that, which is...

Antony: Absolutely man. And yeah. And all of that stuff helps, I believe that.

Ximena: Right, but do you think also though that, I guess cos what was interesting that you mentioned before is that, you could see people um, who clearly didn't need financial support to get the things done, um, and you know, like you said you felt very lucky and privileged to be able to do... that you've self-funded. But that you still saw people who maybe didn't need the funding. I mean I suppose, that, does that kind of reflect maybe a... sense of, they don't understand that financial side... Do you know what I mean?

Antony: Kind of.

Ximena: I suppose what I'm trying to say is that, it seems like this, maybe a misunderstanding at their end, this is me speculating...

Antony: At the funding decision makers end?

Ximena: Yeah, in terms of where potentially the money is needed the most?

Antony: Yeah, that's actually a really interesting point you make. Sometimes I'm kind of looking at it myself... I don't know. There's always going to be that thing. Cos at the end of the day, we could fund our own thing. Which is great. And surely that's the aim right? The aim is that artists should be able to fund their own endeavors, you know. Yeah wow. That's just a really interesting thought, I don't know if I have a concrete idea around it or answer for that, but yeah. Kind of having been in that middle ground. When I'm looking at it now and thinking man, considering the fact that we could actually have enough going on in the bank, to keep pushing it.

Ximena: But yeah I guess maybe you were in that kind of precarious position between like 'this would really really help'....

Antony: Totally! But, I can. Yeah. Or 'this would give us heaps more options', you know? Like.. Yeah. Um.

[01:00:25.19]Ximena: So, with, social media, you're quite active with PleasePlease social media, and also with your own music work, so with your website, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, all these things. Um, so, can you tell me a bit more about how this gets managed, so do you do most of that?

Antony: With PleasePlease, it was pretty much Ryan, he kind of ran all of that. Um, with my own stuff, yeah. I kind of stay on top of everything.

Ximena: Yup. And so, so why do you think you have presence on these platforms?

Antony: Well, cos if I don't, I can't really... I couldn't see how people would be able to engage with what I'm doing. Like it does seem to be a tangible indicator as to how things are tracking. Yeah.

Ximena: With like the number of likes on something, or.. the engagement is the tangible -

Antony: Yeah just the general engagement, like it gives you a way to kind of clearly engage with people all over the world. Which is really cool. And because most of the... actually all of... pretty much all of the music I've ever released, apart from one EP we did with Oh Mary, we created a physical copy, everything else has just been online. So it exists solely in that world, there is no physical element to the music. So, that being said, like, it's awesome. Like, I can publish my music for free and you know then advertise it myself.

[01:02:04.14]Ximena: And so people can engage with it much more easily.

Antony: People can engage with it, or you know, if shows are coming up, it's just an awesome tool.

Ximena: Right. So you see it as like this necessary tool as a musician?

Antony: Oh yeah. Definitely. Completely necessary.

Ximena: And so do you feel like you've kind of, I guess, cos with your own music, it's kind of... I noticed that some of the posts on your own music page and also your own personal Facebook page were pretty similar. So you feel like there's this brand identity that you have to create that's consistent across the two?

Antony: Yeah, pretty much. Totally. But I think for me that it's less a 'brand identity' and more just like kind of trying to make it a true reflection, you know, of what my life is.

Ximena: So you see it as just you being you?

Antony: But again, in endeavouring to do that I suppose I am endeavouring to curate an identity. [laughs] Some sort of brand.

Ximena: Yeah, cos I mean I guess you become like.... I guess it's not your immediate concern at the moment, by the way you're talking about it, you don't see yourself as a commodity, but essentially...

Antony: No. But I would want what's on there to reflect me.

Ximena: Mmm. So you kind of see it as this authenticity, that you're just being yourself on those.

Antony: Yeah. I hope it comes across that way. [laughs] But anyway, yeah definitely.

Ximena: Right, yeah. And I guess that's kind of the freedom that you have with your own project, that you're not thinking about it in terms of the brand, or money, or a commodity or anything, that this is just you being... yeah. Doing your own thing. And that seeing how people engage with that, regardless of being conscious of that, right?

Antony: Yeah absolutely.

Ximena: Or trying to craft that in a particularly... like 'I want to look like this online'.

[01:03:58.07]Antony: There's always an element of that. In the same way as you decide what clothes you're going to put on before you walk down the street. But I try and just keep those two things the same I guess.

Ximena: Right, exactly, it's not sort of like 'this is Ants as a musician'... and this is him not -

Antony: Yeah. Those are lines I'd like to keep.... yeah.

Ximena: Do you think it was different with PleasePlease?

Antony: Nah, cos I don't think we were savvy enough, or intentional enough to create some sort of weird alter-ego or, you know. Ummm. But I think there was probably a bit more intentionality around what it was. Yeah. I don't know. But we never really took it that far.

[01:04:46.12]Ximena: Yeah, right. It kind of was just a...

Antony: And to be honest, we didn't really at that point understand the value of social media and the importance of it. And that was actually something that like, other friends with management, we'd always just kind of crack up cos like our managers would just be like 'you need to be posting!' And we'd always be like 'ahhhh'!

Ximena: So there was pressure from management for you guys to do it yourself?

Antony: Oh yeah, definitely.

Ximena: So they weren't like 'we're going to manage this for you' -

Antony: Not for us. Yeah. Maybe it could have got to that point, but not for us.

Ximena: So they also didn't sit down with you and be like 'this is this thing' -

Antony: 'Let's plan this out', no no there was no marketing strategy or anything like that. It was very much just like 'you need to be putting crap on social media' [laughs]

[01:05:34.27]Ximena: Right. Almost just... anything, put it on?

Antony: Yeah. Just keeping your presence online. And like, I don't know, now, I completely see the value of it. Because I know that if I'm posting, and if it's relatively interesting, then I get more followers. And if I get more followers, then I get more people listening to my music.

Ximena: And then I guess that there's that awareness that people have that you are playing a gig -

Antony: Totally. That I am a person or a human being making his thing, and... totally.

Ximena: Right. And if you expect them to find that without the internet, then it's kind of like... how?

Antony: Yeah, how? Literally. Like how are you going to do that.

[01:06:11.20]Ximena: Yeah, definitely. Um, do you feel like that's kind of a chore as well though, like... maintaining that? Or it's just something that you're excited about and you just kind of do anyway?

Antony: I think ahh at this point in time anyway it's something... I make kind of a personal thing. Doing it when stuff's happening, but not trying to make stuff up if it's not happening. And just kind of keeping it that way.

Ximena: Right. So like back to that kind of authenticity thing, not posting to post?

Antony: There's an element of that, ohh... actually, for me, it's more just for headspace. Like I just don't want to live with my entire brain in the internet. And so if we're away on holiday for three weeks at Rotoiti, I might put up a photo if I catch some fish, but I'm not going to like you know, be like.... or if I'm about to release a music album, I'll hit it. But like, I'm not going to be like, posting stuff on social media everyday if we're just kind of like hanging out at the lake. Does that make sense?

Ximena: Yeah. No definitely. And I think that's also interesting as well that it's like posting when there's something there, when I feel like a lot of the way that organisations or brands manage that, it's like posting to post because that's what we have to do. So I feel like that's interesting that you have that, 'I'm only going to post when something's actually happening'

[01:07:31.17]Antony: Yeah. And I think that is for me for right now, but I can see that changing for sure, like.... especially if this was my sole income, then I'd probably feel quite differently about it.

Ximena: Right, in what sort of way?

Antony: Like, if, ummm maybe.... if it was the one thing I was doing all the time, then I would... yeah. Feel the need to keep posting all the time.

Ximena: Because there is that.... maybe commercial pressure as an artist?

Antony: Well, now there would be, yeah.

Ximena: If that was the one thing you were relying on?

Antony: But at the moment, um yeah I'm just... quite happy with how it's tracking.

Ximena: You can just have the flexibility to just do it when you feel like you need to?

Antony: Yeah, yeah.

Ximena: Ummm, so I guess yeah you've kind of really said that the internet has helped you a lot as a tool?

Antony: Immensely, like I could never conceive of doing this without the internet. Like I couldn't even conceive it being a viable career option. Like unless you have like a record deal.

Ximena: Right, and you think that's good financially as well as this exposure thing, that those two things go hand in hand?

Antony: Absolutely. 100%.

Ximena: But then also like what do you think about, I don't know, people being.... there's also the expectation of things being free online, do you feel like that that implicates you negatively?

[01:08:52.27]Antony: I just think the whole game's changed. People aren't... If they're not there yet, then they're just fighting a losing battle, you know? Like if... yeah. I don't know.

Ximena: So you're super pro-

Antony: Oh, 100%. Cos what I think it's doing for me as a musician, that means that I can see ways that I can make a life out of music. Because of the internet. Which didn't exist before unless I was like that top, very very top tier of artists. Um, so I think it's wonderful, you know, it's like... there's opportunity there for me now. Which would have only existed before if I was a certain kind of artist. I feel. That's the way I see it.

Ximena: Mmm ok. So it kind of... it introduces you to so many more opportunities that then might be like a lucrative sort of thing?

Antony: Potentially yeah. But I think that the coolest thing is that it means like, again like, planning to move eventually, but it means I can preempt that now.

Ximena: Right, through a globally connected world that now people in wherever can listen to your music?

Antony: Yeah totally. I just think it's amazing. Completely amazing. And if I'm not getting a dollar every time someone downloads my song, or 50 cents or whatever my cut is by the end of it, like, that doesn't bother me. If people are listening.... And I mean Spotify is starting to pay. Like, yeah. I need to get my head more in that game to kind of like really argue that point, but I really... yeah.

[01:10:33.01]Ximena: So you see Spotify as a good thing?

Antony: Yup, I do, yup. Like I mean if... yeah. No I do.

Ximena: So you've got I guess with PleasePlease, which is on Spotify, you've got some good gains from that?

Antony: Ummmmm I have to get back to you on that actually. But I just... I just think the fact that I can gauge that there's been, you know, a hundred and something thousand times that song's been listened to, like that's... yeah. I need to get back to you on how that actually works out financially. Yeah I'll have to get back to you.

Ximena: That's alright we can chat again later. Umm, but so do you think there are any negatives about the internet?

Antony: Mmmmm.... if you exist in that old paradigm, of course there are, but I think.... but I just think the game's changed, you know. For the better, like really. I do. Yeah. Um, any negatives I see about the internet is the way it impedes on me personally in my interactions with the world. Like how I personally get sucked in to social media and then.... twenty minutes go by and I'm all the way down my Instagram feed going "what am I doing?! Ahh". Cos I don't want to live my life like that. But I... yeah. I don't know. I don't really see as a musician, I don't see any negatives to the internet. Nothing springs to mind.

Ximena: Right. So you mean just more personally, like... in the way of procrastination?

[01:12:08.20]Antony: Yeah, just in the way I live my life. Yeah. Often I think it can be.... but again. That's more a matter of my own self-control.... I'm not going to blame the internet for that.

Ximena: Right, right. But I guess with that pressure to be on the internet maybe to... like let people know about what you're doing as a musician, then maybe there's like... more time that you're spending on it... I don't know. Would that be-?

Antony: Yeah yeah, but even for me, for that.... that's different. I'd see that more as an awesome way that I can like easily market myself and what I'm doing. As opposed to going to the copy center and printing off a bunch of posters or flyers and handing them out to people, which for me doesn't sound very fun. That might be somebody else's jam. But for me that's not.... like I'd rather just to be able to... you know send it to a bunch of places I know people are probably going to engage with, on the internet.

[01:13:04.14]Ximena: Mmm. So I'm just curious as well, because I remember that, I don't think you had Facebook for a while...?

Antony: I did. And well the reason I got it back was when I started.... now that's probably an interesting thing. The reason I got back my personal Facebook page was because I must have had over a thousand 'friends' on that page, and when you promote things on a band page, like, there's so little guarantee that it's going to get to the people who follow you. And you have to start paying for that. For them to actually service that content to people's Facebook feeds who follow you. But with a personal page, like, all those people that are, you know, my friend on Facebook, unless they've like.. kind of decided not to follow me cos I advertise my music too much or something, then as far as I'm aware there's a way better chance that they're gonna actually be able to engage with what I'm actually doing. And so for me like it works way more like... like a yeah, social medium. Like, I basically accept every friend request. Like, unless it's like kind of weird. Like, generally I'll just accept anything just because like that for me is like engaging with, and building that fan base in a really tangible way. Um, so those things were completely connected. I would not have got that back unless I.... but you know the reason I got it back was cos it's such an awesome tool for promoting music. So when I started doing... and that was a friend of mine who is a musician as well, that's what he was like... "oh, I do way more advertising on my personal page than I.... I get way more from the advertising that I do on my personal page than I do from my uhh band page or whatever". And I think that's interesting, because people... I think... when people are engaging with your page as a friend, you know, they're kind of like, "Ohhh go you! Look you're doing another.... I'll give that a like!" Or whatever [laughs].

Ximena: Because they maybe have that personal connection -

[01:15:17.05]Antony: Yeah like I feel like there's a personal connection there. Yeah. But again it is probably a mentality thing as well, I'm not... I'm not trying to create a gap between me and my audience. Like I think I'm just trying to create an audience. And I see sort of a more personal... maybe a more viable way of doing that.

Ximena: Right, because you feel like there are those, maybe personal, authentic relationships that pre-existed in real life that then got put onto social media and then you could kind of keep in touch with those people?

Antony: Yeah, and I just think, if people have a personal connection to what I'm doing, with music and stuff, then they're maybe more likely to buy into that and support that, you know. Even if they're just listening to the music. Which I think is cool.

Ximena: Right, yeah. And then I guess also all those people have their own networks that then -

Antony: Yeah absolutely and so potentially they might feel inclined to like, you know, and they do. Which is awesome.

Ximena: Yeah, definitely. Cool, um. So just this last little bit, so aside from any promotional social media work that you feel like you take part in, promoting your music, so do you feel like there's any other work that you do as a musician that's not simply just writing music? I guess you said about the production side, are there any other types of...?

Antony: So apart from writing and recording and playing shows?

Ximena: Mmmmm.

[01:16:49.01]Antony: Ummmmm...

Ximena: I guess kind of admin type of organisational stuff that you have to do to be able to...?

Antony: Yeah and I suppose I'm just starting to get into that world now, because I'm.... like at the moment I'm self-managed, like I don't have a manager. But it's just, yeah, putting together my calendar, and I'm in the process of kind of trying to get everything above board with the tax man. So it's all kind of... yeah sitting right there. So there's all that kind of thing. But, um...

Ximena: Right, cos I guess as a musician you'd be a self-employed person, you'd have to file -

Antony: Yeah. But I'm just literally scratching the surface of that monster. Yeah so... again, it's probably one of those things when like, in 6 months I'll be like 'oh, this is how I do it', but right now I'm kind of just in the process of really establishing that. With PleasePlease though, uhh Teresa just took care of all that. She had an accountant, and uhh. And she just managed everything. Like, so she booked all the tours and... and booked all the flights and... or whatever. She kind of set everything up for us.

[01:17:53.12]Ximena: Right. So, but now you're... that's your job for your own personal music?

Antony: Yup.

Ximena: So you're just learning -

Antony: Learning as I go. Yeah. And I, yeah. And a lot of it is pretty.... A lot of that stuff's kind of straightforward. Just planning your life. But then, yeah some of it's pretty new. Definitely, definitely learning. But I think, yeah, I don't know.... I think if you were a really busy artist, you know, I could definitely see the value in having someone like looking after that stuff for you.

Ximena: Yep, so you can spend more time on the actual -

Antony: Yeah, just doing that. Ah, it's an awesome luxury. Yeah.

[01:18:32.20]Ximena: And so how did you get, um, a.... form a relationship with Teresa? And so was that Ryan who organised that, or?

Antony: I suppose so yeah. So Ryan was.... he was a drum tech for Six60 who was managed by Teresa. So he met Teresa.... And he'd been on a bunch of their tours, and so obviously on tour you kinda make friends with people who are touring and... anyway. When we'd kind of... we had a handful of songs that we were sort of excited about. And one in particular we wanted to get on the radio. And as far as we knew... oh we didn't kind of really know how to do that. So, Ryan called up Teresa and was like 'hey I'm in a band, actually, I'm not just the drum tech for six60, um can you tell me how to get my songs on the radio' pretty much. And she was like 'send me the songs'... so we sent her the songs and... yeah. And so it started out just she was mentoring us. And then we had another offer for some other managers. Another company were like, had heard some stuff from us, and then kind of tried to see if we'd go with them. And ummm... and so we told Teresa like this has happened and she was kind of like 'do you want me to manage you cos I'll manage you' and we were like 'Ok! We'll go with you!' And then... yeah. So nothing happened with those other guys.

Ximena: And how did those other guys... the other potential managers, how did they hear about your music?

Antony: Sooo... those other guys... it's quite funny. So that was Saiko Management whose like... was Lorde and everyone. And it was right at the time that like we met up with one of them and it was right as.... they were like 'yeah we've got one other artist, this girl Lorde she's like at a high school dah dah dah dah dah', and she wasn't even a thing at that point in time. Um, but, just friends of a friend actually. So one of... yeah. One of Ryan's flatmates, ohh one of my flatmates actually, um his friend's brother-in-law was that guy, you know.

[01:20:46.16]Ximena: From Saiko?

Antony: Yeah, from Saiko, and was like 'ahhh you should check out my flatmate's band', kind of thing. And then they heard some stuff and were like... and so we went out for a beer and kind of talked about what it could look like, and what they wanted to do, and yeah. We were so green at that point in time, like we had no idea... and even at that point in time that was probably bad. Like... [laughs]. Maybe a little bit bad by Teresa... But anyway. That was... how the story went.

Ximena: Right. Cool. And so... right. And then that just sort of... that started the whole relationship with Teresa? And she -

Antony: Pretty much. Well that kind of solidified it really.

[01:21:24.29]Ximena: Right. Ok. Cool! Alrighty, I think that's all my questions, do you wanna, have you got anything else that you feel like you... I don't know, didn't expand on, or.... want to add?

Antony: Not really. I just... I feel like these are.... these are my... I don't know. It's kind of the weird thing about putting your thoughts to tape. I was kind of going, 'this is my thoughts at the moment', you know, and my experiences are pretty limited, I guess. Comparatively. I mean comparative to some of them, probably extensive, but like, yeah comparative to others, probably pretty limited. But I... yeah. I dunno. I think that's... so I yeah. I say that to be like 'man maybe in 6 months I might not even think what I think now', you know? But like yeah hopefully it helps with your research!

Ximena: Yeah no thank you very much, um, yeah I guess it's good cos like I'm hopefully... I'm talking to some people who have been in the industry for a lot longer. And then some people who are a little bit more fresh. Um. Like yourself. Um so yeah I guess getting that diversity in opinion will be what I'm look forward to.

ENDS.

Appendix 3: Transcript of interview 2

Emma, member of the band Decades, based in Christchurch.

[00:00:03.28]Ximena: So can you talk me through an overview of your involvement and history in the New Zealand music industry?

[00:00:09.10]Emma: Alright, well um, I have been playing in a rock band uh for about the last ten years, but it's just kind of been the last I guess 3 or 4 years that we've tried to actually you know produce songs and albums and get radio plays, you know, take it seriously really. Um I've been in a band the entire time, which is cool, just actually realised yesterday that it had been a decade and our band name is called 'Decades' [laughs]. Yeah. So yeah I guess I've been working as a musician and uh working full time in another job uh kind of basically working two full-time jobs for the last three or four years. Yeah.

[00:00:57.15]Ximena: And so what's that other full-time job that you do?

[00:00:59.25]Emma: Um I do graphic design, so I work in a creative agency at the moment, but I also do a bit of uh freelance stuff outside of work as well.

[00:01:09.21]Ximena: Mmm right.

[00:01:10.25]Emma: To make up the extra money to pay for more band stuff basically [laughs].

[00:01:13.26]Ximena: Right of course. And so you do that like full-time, 9-5 type of thing during the week?

[00:01:19.27]Emma: Yup, yup. Monday to Friday, 9 til 5. Yup.

[00:01:23.20]Ximena: And then your music work just kinda has to fit around that really?

[00:01:27.24]Emma: Yeah basically, yeah. Um band practice on average for between 3 and 5 nights of the week, and um yeah if anything comes up that we need to be away from work for then just have to work to fit around that basically.

[00:01:44.17]Ximena: Mmmm. And so are your band members in a similar position?

[00:01:49.13]Emma: Yeah we all work full-time. We all have day-jobs, well our bass player has more of a night-job, so it's kind of harder for him, cos we have band practice at night and then he's meant to be in bed at like 5 o'clock [laughs]. Needs to get up at 1.... Yeah. But yeah we all work full-time.

[00:02:07.18]Ximena: Um, and so what about your current day-to-day life in the music industry? So take me through a 'week-in-the-life-of-Emma' in regards to all of your music related activity?

[00:02:17.02]Emma: Um, a week in the life of me right now is uhh trying to hide the fact that I'm doing band communications while I'm at my full-time job [laughs]. Everyday... sending emails...discussing, you know, with my bandmates what's going on and... at the moment we're organising a tour, we're going on tour with another band, and so I'm organising that everyday. Booking flights, sorting out logistics, my manager calls me probably every other day for at least twenty minutes, which has to kind of work into my lunch break, and then um on the weekends it's yeah more band practice, more organisation.... planning, planning what's coming up, We've got a song at radio at the moment, we've got a second single in the planning pipeline with it's music video and promotional plans, and we've got an album release to start conceptualising on a small scale while we slowly get closer to its imminent release. More just thinking of album names, artwork ideas, just initial fun stuff. We're also talking with a label at the moment so I'm chasing that up with my manager every day seeing where that is at. So yeah, it's taking up my time everyday, and then obviously every evening. Not every evening, but, kind of every other evening during the week with band practice as well, after the day job, so. Yeah.

[00:03:12.28]Ximena: And so you're starting a tour in.... the next wee while, right?
It's pretty soon?

[00:03:20.27]Emma: Yeah yeah the tour's in April. Yeah, New Zealand tour. Yeah. So that's kind of taking up a bit of my stress and time at the moment.

[00:03:30.03]Ximena: Um and is that, are you needing to take time off work for that?

[00:03:35.02]Emma: Yeah, yeah. That's the thing like with touring as a band in New Zealand, it's kind of like New Zealand's so small, so you can't really play you know, Monday Tuesday Wednesday anyway, barely anyone's gunna come, so it's quite good in that respect, because you can kind of do tours over Thursday Friday Saturday, so over the weekends, so the time off work isn't as bad; I mean my work's really good because they understand that the band is, is the most important thing to me, so they're like, 'as long as you kind of put in the good work at work, we'll kind of let you have time off whenever you want'. Umm the other guys struggle a bit more, but we always manage to make it work somehow [laughs].

[00:04:13.18]Ximena: Do they also do work in like creative fields as well, outside of the music work?

[00:04:17.24]Emma: Yeah well ahh our guitarist is a music teacher, he teaches the subject at high school level, um, and that, yeah, he's the only other one working kind of in a creative field or with music, the other guys have more uh, our drummer has quite a technical job, and our bass player kind of just has a make-ends-meet job [laughs]. Yeah.

[00:04:44.21]Ximena: Right. And so that's interesting... cos I feel like, I don't know, working in a creative agency, often there is that expectation that THAT comes first... I don't know, I guess from doing a lot of research myself into the labour conditions in the creative industries, that often in you know creative jobs, there's that expectation that that comes first, so that's quite interesting.

[00:05:08.08]Emma: Yeah, I'm really lucky in that respect, we have a really small team. They've had a lot of staff come and go, like quite frequently over the years, and I've stuck around for quite a long time, so I think they're kind of wanting, you know, to show some respect to me as well by letting me follow my dreams outside of work. As long as I'm still kind of you know getting what they need to get done. Yeah. It's really good, I'm really lucky. Your question leading to this answer made me think on the fact that our band, it is a business in a creative industry. We are a company, and as the director, I do expect that the band comes first for all the members! haha. So I am fighting against everyone's boss in the battle of which business is more important! I'm also fighting against the band members' natural instincts to respect or fear their day-job employers more than they respect or fear my authority as the 'leader' of our band. I guess that's because none of us are earning an income by our business.. yet.

[00:05:35.25]Ximena: And do you feel like you can kind of compartmentalise those two... I mean I suppose you were saying before that you felt like a lot of it crosses over, that you're doing band work at work, but...

[00:05:47.04]Emma: Yeah [laughs]

[00:05:47.04]Ximena: But do you feel like you can still sort of think like 'ok this is the work that I need to do be able to pay the bills' and then 'this is my music work'? Or is it kind of... or does it cross over maybe a bit more than that?

[00:05:57.20]Emma: It probably crosses over a little bit, but yeah I do have to um I guess task set and make sure I keep my focus on my day job when I'm there as much as I can, and then yeah try and set some time aside, or like a lot of the time at work, if I end up doing band stuff it will be because I'm about due for a wee break, you know, from what I'm doing at work, or I just.. I need a mental break from what I'm doing. Cos you know like my job can be quite creatively draining as well, umm working in a small team, and being in a city where there isn't really that many places to escape, it's kind of... yeah just doing band stuff is kind of like a wee mini break for me at work [laughs]. What i would like to add is that it is my goal that

music becomes 'the work i need to do to be able to pay the bills' - it's becoming more of a pipedream in this musical landscape but it's still a goal of mine.

[00:06:42.29]Ximena: Right, yeah that's interesting... that like you know you don't have to... maybe sit on your phone and scroll through Instagram as a break...

[00:06:50.24]Emma: Exactly! I can be productive on my break [laughs]

[00:06:54.23]Ximena: Yeah that's interesting. Um, and so what do you like and dislike about working in the New Zealand music industry?

[00:07:01.29]Emma: Ohh. Um, what do I like?

[00:07:07.00]Ximena: Yup.

[00:07:07.00]Emma: I like that, uh, I like that it doesn't feel exclusive. Like it feels quite tight knit when you meet other people working in the industry, it's always quite open and friendly and... everyone's interested in what everyone else is doing, it doesn't feel that competitive, I think when we were... when we were more up and coming, like, had not released anything, and didn't really have an understanding of the industry, but you know you have kind of these grand ideas and expectations of how you're gonna blow up and get famous, I think I felt at the time, and other bands in that position, you feel a lot more bitter towards it because you feel like I've been left out of the club, and I'm not being picked up, but in retrospect, having been there and kind of having those attitudes, it's now like well I just wasn't trying hard enough, I wasn't working hard enough, I wasn't going out there and trying to make it work, I was just playing the music and thinking that it was going to come and find me. Um... so yeah. I like that about the New Zealand music industry, that you know, once you put in the work and you show you're worthy of respect and you're doing something, um, everyone's just super embracing and even cross genres, you know, everyone's really supportive of each other, I really like that. Um.. what I don't like about the industry? Ahh... is almost probably the same thing [laughs]. That it's so small, and um... I guess there's limited opportunity here and there's limited... it feels like there's limited space to do well, because, oh I don't know why that is

actually. It's like, you feel like there's limited spots available for any given amount of New Zealand acts to be doing well at the same time. It's quite weird, whereas if you think more on the scale of... if we were in America, you know, there's a lot more opportunity, and you can be working, um, not on a commercial level, but still be uh kind of making ends meet with the band, and doing that full-time, even if you're kind of in more of an alternative sector. I don't think there's much room to do that here. Uh as a rock band, I think it might be different, I'm assuming it probably is, a wee bit different if you are a solo artist or something and there's less expenses, less people to.. look after. But, yeah. I don't think there's anything that I really dislike... I think I disliked it more when I wasn't actually working hard enough and getting, you know, getting somewhere with my music. Just more of a bitter perspective [laughs]. Now I'm a lot more positive.

[00:09:41.28]Ximena: Interesting. Um, and so with, um, with that, you felt like you've been more positive by working harder, so is that kind of just by, I don't know, networking more with people, or trying to promote your music more actively?

[00:10:00.11]Emma: I think all of it. I think networking is a huge thing, and um, we obviously are Christchurch-based, so it can be a struggle at times, you know, to make the effort to go up to Auckland a lot and meet a lot of people, um, yeah I think networking is a massive one. But yeah at the end of the day, the most important thing is whether your music's any good or not. So, I think it's mostly just actually trying to create better songs each time, um. Yeah, you know, when we first started, you think that, every band thinks that their own music's cool, so I think, you know, we've just gotten better at song writing, and just in retrospect realising that what we were creating when we started just wasn't actually that good [laughs].

[00:10:45.10]Ximena: Right, and is that, when you made kind of an image shift from um, is it Ashe?

[00:10:52.15]Emma: Um yup Ashe.

[00:10:54.21]Ximena: -to Decades, is that kind of where you felt that transition happened?

[00:11:01.10]Emma: Um, probably not in the actual change of the band name, like we changed our band name while we were recording the album we're working on right now, so we were kind of quite already in a more positive mindset in getting stuff done, but I think just that... yeah. The actual transition itself in terms of starting to take stuff more seriously, and finding and working with, you know, way more influential and talented people and stuff, yeah definitely the transition from Ashei to Decades in the grand scheme of it, yeah. We weren't like 'oh yeah this feels different' on the day we changed our name, it was a big growing process that lead to a change in name.

[00:11:45.03]Ximena: Right, right, that you kind of felt that your identity as a band was maybe changing.

[00:11:50.13]Emma: Yup definitely.

[00:11:52.17]Ximena: With the people that you were working with?

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[00:11:53.20]Emma: Yeah, and it wasn't just the change of the sound of music, you know, it was just the whole mindset shift to taking it more seriously, and being professionals, and not just being some band in Christchurch that kind of plays a local gig every now and then and likes to write songs. Yeah, the big changeover to... actually we want to do this as a career. Which we've always wanted, since we started, but now it seems more like we're in a position to actually understand what that means, as opposed to it being a pipe dream.

[00:12:27.05]Ximena: Right. So you, like, and also just putting in more time, maybe? Was that part of-?

[00:12:33.14]Emma: Definitely. Just taking it on a whole new level of serious that we had never even considered was the thing to do. Yeah. To make it happen. Yeah.

[00:12:47.15]Ximena: Yeah, right. And just kind of realising that you needed to do that if you wanted to... I don't know pursue it more as a career. Yeah.

[00:12:54.17]Emma: That's what it takes. Yeah.

[00:12:56.22]Ximena: Umm so, with the size that mentioned about how small New Zealand was and how that was kind of frustrating in terms of limited opportunities, so do you feel like maybe trying to pursue the music overseas, is that something that you're interested in?

[00:13:16.21]Emma: Yeah. Eventually. I think like we call New Zealand home, and we call Christchurch home, and a lot of bands from Christchurch or anywhere outside of Auckland that want to do well think that they have to move to Auckland to do well, but we're kind of actively trying to prove that wrong. And you compare it to anywhere international, like Australia um they don't have one city that the music industry has to operate out of, and in America the same thing, like, you don't have to be in LA to be a successful musician. And I think um yeah we're trying to hold onto that here, we want to do well in New Zealand before we even look at going overseas, because we want to.. we like, we love New Zealand and we love Christchurch and we just wanna see what we can do here first. Cos ideally you make this your base. And if the music connects with people overseas, then you go overseas to play it to them, but ideally we live here, this is our home. Um, yeah. And just tour over there, explore over there, so opportunities. Although as our careers progress, and potentially we get to explore more of the world with the band, we might fall in love with somewhere else, or realise that somewhere overseas is going to hugely benefit us and the band a lot more. But yeah at the moment, yeah we only want to start with New Zealand and see what we can do here.

[00:14:30.27]Ximena: Right, just kind of get to the maybe top of this type of market here -

[00:14:35.11]Emma: And it kind of, like what I said about how um bands from Christchurch or Dunedin or whatever think 'oh to do well we have to be in Auckland', it's that same thing, if you feel like you can't do well in your own

country, like 'oh we have to go to Melbourne' or 'oh we have to go to London', you go over there and it's basically starting from square one and you don't know anyone and it's like why not try and make it work here first and then get all the connections you need here to get a team together that can actually help you take it overseas.

[00:15:05.14]Ximena: Right, right. Yeah.

[00:15:07.06]Emma: So yeah. We've never ever ever considered just being like 'you know what, let's just go to a new country, and try and see what happens there because there's more opportunities', I don't think it works that way. You've got to put in the hard work and learn about how the industry works first. Of course, this is our first project so this is my perspective on it looking forward. And I'm still learning, I'm like a 2 year old in the scheme of it all, I feel. If we had all already been in successful projects and understood the industry landscape a lot more by experience, we would be in more of a position to go 'you know, this isn't going to work here, let's go to New York, or London' or wherever we knew it would be better for the project to launch from. But as it stands right now, let's figure out home.

[00:15:19.08]Ximena: Um and so you also said before that you felt like, now maybe you feel like you're making better songs than when you were before, when you weren't taking it as seriously, so how do you feel like you assess that, how like, is it because of your assessment as a band, or is it with like the interaction that you've had with fans, or...?

[00:15:41.10]Emma: The question of why did I think our songs are getting better?

[00:15:45.27]Ximena: Yeah. Like how do you make that.. I'm just curious about what's the..

[00:15:51.00]Emma: It is quite subjective [laughs]. Um... I'd say because, you know, when we first, I think it's song versus networking, definitely. But on the songs aspect of it, I mean we were paying to send our old songs and radio wasn't picking them up, and we were like 'whyyy, why aren't they picking them up? Is there some

vendetta against a girl in a band, or is there some vendetta against Christchurch bands?', but at the end of the day, you listen to ah like a song that we have at radio now, versus a song that we sent to radio 6 or 7 years ago and it didn't get there, you can just hear the obviousness of... well yeah. Because the new one that you've released now is a better song. It's a better song. Um, yeah. I mean obviously some of our older fans would disagree, they'd like the older song [laughs]. We can tell when we've personally developed. And just the hours that we've put in, like how you get better with every extra hour you put into your craft, and back in the day we were, I wasn't writing at all and our song writer would maybe bring in a new song to practice every couple months, whereas when we started on this album process, me and the other song writer, he lives in Auckland, but we would go home after our day jobs everyday and aim to write a song a day. And we ended up getting together 200 songs, and like how could they not be better... than when you started and hadn't written 200 songs in three months. So it's like.. yeah.

[00:17:28.13]Ximena: Right, it's just kind of almost just putting in that time to just... develop the skill, rather than just...

[00:17:33.16]Emma: Exactly, I don't know who... yeah. I don't know who was the original person that said it, but it was something like, you know, to become an expert at something, 10,000 hours.

[00:17:43.27]Ximena: Yeah, right. Absolutely. So it's not just sort of you have this inherent creative talent and you can just produce amazing music from the get go, I guess it's just with everything.

[00:17:54.27]Emma: Yeah. Everyone has to start somewhere, and build it up, and then we're also lucky in that we started, you know making relationships with um our producer, who's now our producer. And he, you know, he is very experienced. And provided helpful feedback, that then could help us develop the songwriting further, because he's posing ideas and techniques and all that kind of stuff that um... you know, pushes the song that you are working on, and you learn new things, and then when you go on and you write your next song the next day you take that on board and the song's better, you know. You just keep building it. Yeah.

[00:18:29.16]Ximena: Right and that, so that was Tom Larkin?

[00:18:32.06]Emma: Yes! That's Tom.

[00:18:36.04]Ximena: Right. And so do you feel like all of the way that he's helped kind of shape the development of the band has been mostly a positive thing, like it hasn't meant that you've felt like you've made any, I don't know, concessions as an artist, or whatever?

[00:18:52.16]Emma: No. Yeah no it's been entirely positive, like, it's only been a growth and a development as opposed to us being.. you know there's been a bit of like, uhh, there has been times of tension when he's trying to tell us about something, you know, or talk to us like about um our attitudes towards something, or the way that we approach um the rehearsal of something, you know, just little details in how we work and it's challenging to us, cos you know we're coming from like, kind of taking it quite casual, to he's trying to massage us into taking it more seriously, and so you butt heads over stuff like that... humans are stubborn. Um and... but there has been absolutely no negatives in the actual development, positive development of the band. But there's been negative uhh headbutting in the process of that to learn the positive outcomes [laughs].

[00:19:49.28]Ximena: Right, yup yup. So it's kind of been more of a positive journey rather than any sort of ...

[00:19:56.16]Emma: Yeah. And at the end of the day, any arguments or uhh stubbornness or ill feelings towards being told what to do, you get to the other side and you learn the behaviour or you learn the technique and you go 'oh ok yeah he was right' and it was often that he told me that thing, you know [laughs].

[00:20:15.16]Ximena: And so, but do you think like if you've had maybe more commercial success with the development of the way that your band has changed, do you feel like that has maybe... I don't know, I mean it sounds to me that you're

like pretty happy with the changes, and then also more commercial success has come along with that, is that...

[00:20:42.20]Emma: Yeah definitely. There's absolutely no contention or... it's all been good. And in terms of like him pushing us like that, and we're all working full-time, you know, he's lumping on more work... and obviously things can get a bit stressful in that respect, but it's good for us, at the end of the day, we need it [laughs]. if perhaps Tom pushed us in a different direction where we want to go etc, just for the sake of commercial success. And I will say no, because to me that sort of 'selling out' is more to do with moving towards top 40. Where we were at with Ashei music was we were sitting weirdly between pop and rock. And we knew we really needed to choose a direction; to go heavier, or to go poppier. Well going poppier was absolutely not an option, we all grew up on rock music to varying degrees and it is our absolute ambition to be known as a rock band. So when I first met up with Tom and he said to me exactly that (what we had been talking about as a band for the previous months) it was like DING this is our guy. He got it, and he knew we could get there.

[00:21:03.03]Ximena: Right.

[00:21:03.27]Emma: We need it to do well.

[00:21:06.27]Ximena: Mmmm. And I mean I suppose that he's had, from what I've read about him, that he's had like a lot of experience in the rock industry rather than trying to shape you into... any more commercial pop type of music, so I guess he kind of maybe understands you more than potentially a more big business type of Sony producer....

[00:21:32.01]Emma: Definitely. Definitely. I mean we've worked with a couple other producers over the years, um, for when we were Ashei, and yeah it's more like they're encouraging uhh you know getting more poppy and commercial sounding. I mean Tom found us off the back of the last EP we did where it was quite commercial sounding, and he was like 'I like the songs, but you guys need to be more badass, like you're a rock band, you're not gunna crack into the Edge, you're

not going to crack into ZM with this sound, because at the end of the day you're still a rock band but someone's trying to make you sound more sparkly' And I'm like 'I know!' And we were always trying to be more of a rock band and more aggressive, but I guess a lot of producers think, 'oh this band wants to be successful, so top 40, so let's make the production kind of top 40, but it's still rock music!' [laughs] It's meant to go, 'no we want to be a successful rock band', and Tom got that, and I was like 'thank you!' He's like the first producer ever who like let me kind of yell and scream in the vocal booth as opposed to singing softer, singing gentler, so... He's awesome. [laughs]

[00:22:40.12]Ximena: Yeah that's really interesting... kind of trying to take you away from maybe that more mainstream commercial pop market, but then you've had more success by trying to break into the rock market in New Zealand.

[00:22:54.05]Emma: Yeah exactly. Yeah.

[00:22:56.04]Ximena: Right, that's really interesting. Um and so if anything about the music industry was to make you quit as working as a musician, what would that be and why?

[00:23:06.19]Emma: Ummmm if anything were to make me quit... if there was any sort of hugely popular discrimination happening against like minorities within the industry, that would just make me go 'I'm out, I can't with this', um, but I don't know I guess I'll find out when something happens and I'll want to quit [laughs]. I don't have any preconceived ideas of what would make me stop doing music, um. Nah. Not really anything. Only if there was any sort of grand injustices going on.

[00:23:42.23]Ximena: Right, against like your band, or just in kind of a general...

[00:23:47.21]Emma: Um, I guess with my band first and foremost, obviously, but yeah just in general. If there was some super huge just... I mean there already is kind of corruption in the music industry, but I'm quite positive that it will all kind of work itself out over the next ten to twenty years. I think people will start

appreciating music again and it won't be about the money, but yeah. But even that wouldn't really be enough to make me quit cos I would have quit already. [laughs]

[00:24:15.23]Ximena: Wait so do you think there's corruption in the New Zealand music industry, or you mean more widely?

[00:24:22.13]Emma: I think more widely. I think New Zealand's actually really good and um a lot people who work in the music industry in New Zealand give a shit. And they do actually love music. I think overseas it's a lot different. There's a lot more opportunity for it to not be that way, cos the populations are bigger. But I think in New Zealand, as a whole, we're functioning, and we're passionate, and it's all good here.

[00:24:48.25]Ximena: Mmm. And so do you feel like New Zealand has a strong music community then?

[00:24:54.13]Emma: Um, um I'm not sure. I think in certain genres, but uhh I'm not sure in rock music. Um, in like mainstream rock music I think there is a strong community, but being, coming from operating and just kind of playing little bar gigs with your mates... I think the music community, or the support of it isn't very strong, especially with rock music. Um. There's a lot of support for the electronic scenes, yeah, that's basically it right [laughs]. Especially, I mean I'm kind of talking from a Christchurch perspective, but... um. Yeah. I don't know. But I'm not sure if we're unique as a country like that right now though.

[00:25:48.17]Ximena: Right, you think that's kind of the case in other places as well?

[00:25:52.01]Emma: Well yeah like we spent quite a lot of time in Australia last year, and they're like... they've got a huge music industry, like they've got some really talented artists. Um, Triple J, their big kind of make-or-break radio station, people love listening to that, they love finding new music on that. But like I still went to a lot of smaller gigs like local gigs, and there would be like 8 people there. You know? [laughs] And I was like 'oh ok, so it's not like way more exciting over here than

New Zealand', on this smaller scale people still don't come out and support live music, unless they've already been largely successful. Yeah.

[00:26:32.03]Ximena: Yeah. So I guess just having... like within maybe a more niche genre, that maybe that community doesn't exist as strongly, you think?

[00:26:41.15]Emma: Yeah. I'm not even sure if it's niche genre. Cos you could be a band that might eventually like break through, but because you haven't had a bit of radio play or anything, like, people don't come to your gigs, it might just be an awareness issue, but then it's also... where are all these band members' friends and family? Like even... the support from their mates kind of wanes, like 'uhh my friend's in this band, but they play all the time, and I've seen them heaps, like... not going anywhere'. That kind of lack of support, even on that personal level is quite uh can be quite draining. Like friends of mine that haven't come to any of my gigs in like the last few years. I think this is just a lack of understanding of how long it takes to actually work on your craft and 'crack it' in the industry. Punters only see & hear the artists that are currently successful - they have no understanding of the years and years of work that lead up to them finally breaking through. So if you're a musician and you're playing small local shows for 5+ years and slowly building it, your friends and family etc are quite likely going to assume it's going nowhere, you know? And my last relationship, my last partner, he stopped coming to my gigs, cos he's like 'well I've seen you guys play heaps', and I was like 'ok well that's not the point' [laughs]. The point is support.... And we'd get to play to two people, you know? My current boyfriend's awesome, he comes to all my gigs, and I go to all of his, and he's very excited about what we're doing and I'm very excited about what he's doing. But yeah, I've just found that in the past, and even now, like we're doing this tour in April and we'll play in Christchurch and it will be really interesting to me to see um who from our hometown who has known us for the last ten years of the band will actually come and check us out. Cos we haven't really played these songs and played with Decades live yet. So it will kind of be our.. gauging that interest from our long-term peers will be interesting. And even um ah in Auckland, we've got quite a few mates in Auckland. Um, I've got friends up there that have told me that they're not coming to the gig because the tickets are \$40 and it's not even our gig. Do you know what I mean? I'm like 'um ok well I could get you on the

door, but I'm not going to now because you have that terrible attitude if you don't even... can't be bothered supporting us'. Yeah. It's kind of an interesting music community in that respect, but I think once you've got some exposure and some radio play, or um on the internet your song's kind of taken off or whatever, like then the music community and the people who actually connect with your music without knowing you, that support's awesome. But the... the personal support is actually kind of a weird one.

[00:29:00.29]Ximena: Right. That's there's kind of almost this apathy in terms of going to live music.

[00:29:07.01]Emma: Yeah, I guess like if you kind of uh compared it to... if I just went and showed up to my friend's job every day to just kind of cheer them on in their job, I guess it's kind of like that, so I understand, but then also us doing the gig, is still kind of rare, so you'd think it would be kind of exciting. But... yeah. I think yeah... I mean my parents come to every single Christchurch gig without question, but it's more of the friends and the community that kind of just go 'ohhh'. And you can tell that if if anything were to actually happen and you get quite successful then they'd come back and they'd be like 'oh my god my friend plays in this band', you know? It's kind of... kind of interesting [laughs]. That whole... following behind that. And me pointing it out doesn't mean that I'm not guilty or susceptible to that behaviour as well, it's just that's how it is.

[00:29:57.28]Ximena: Right. Yeah no that's really interesting, that kind of ... that people don't see their physical support in terms of live music as being as important as maybe how you see it as a musician, that it's kind of... yeah. Maybe a bit of a disconnect.

[00:30:14.06]Emma: Yeah. It is really interesting. And it's the same... like I said, the same thing applies for me, I'll find, you know, even if the band that I kind of know personally from out of town comes and plays in Christchurch, it's like... it's a struggle for me to get down there and go to the show, do you know what I mean? [laughs]. So I can't even imagine what it's like for people that don't play music or don't know who the band are or whatever to go out and attempt to enjoy live music.

[00:30:44.10]Ximena: Right, I guess like without that direct experience as a musician to try to understand how important it is that they... show their support.

[00:30:53.25]Emma: Yeah [laughs]. But it's interesting like you know talking to kind of the older generation, like my parents or whatever, um you know when they were my age in their twenties, you know, they'd just go out and see live music all the time, it didn't matter who it was, you know? Yeah, it's interesting that cultural shift over the years as well.

[00:31:13.27]Ximena: Right. And what do you think... what do you think has driven that shift?

[00:31:19.23]Emma: The internet! The accessibility of music, definitely. Cos... back then, probably most gigs were free. Local gigs. And if you were kinda skint on cash you probably couldn't afford to buy the albums and stuff you wanted, so you'd go down and see some people play music. But these days you can just get whatever you want for free, in like less than seconds. So, I think that's killing the live music scene, definitely. But then when you're operating on a huge level, and you've got like you know hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of fans, people are going to come see you cos then it becomes this unique experience where you get to see that person in the flesh. And that's an exciting thing. But on a small scale, yeah the internet is definitely killing the smaller live things.

[00:32:06.29]Ximena: Right, right. That's interesting, that people feel like they can engage maybe online and not.... maybe are less driven to engage um in person, possibly.

[00:32:17.11]Emma: Yeah, definitely. Until you become some sort of um you know monument in their life, like your song affects them so much that they feel personally connected to you, therefore they're very excited about seeing you in the flesh, and it's not even about hearing you play the music, they just want to see you as a person and be like 'woah that person's real!' Um, but, for the most part, music consumers online, like Spotify and stuff, I mean I listen to Spotify at work everyday,

I don't connect with every single artist I listen to, and I won't go to their live show even if I kind of like the song that I've heard, like you have to have a really strong emotional connection to the song or the band to want to go to live shows these days I think. Not just to go check it out, you know. I guess if you're personally, you have to feel personally drawn and like obliged to go, because you feel like you want to thank them for affecting you... you know? Yeah.

[00:33:14.27]Ximena: Yup, yup, totally. Rather than a.. thing maybe out of curiosity, it's more like a thing of... yeah. Right.

[00:33:21.07]Emma: Yeah, as opposed to just going and listening to some live music because that's something to do on a Saturday night.

[00:33:26.19]Ximena: Mmmm right. And I guess yeah like you say it's kind of people... you know, have to pick and choose if tickets are quite expensive.

[00:33:35.03]Emma: Yeah.

[00:33:37.29]Ximena: And so what about the um the people within the music industry, so the community that exists there, do you think... how do you feel about that? Do you think that that exists strongly, or...?

[00:33:50.13]Emma: People working within the industry, the sense of community there?

[00:33:53.28]Ximena: Yup.

[00:33:54.23]Emma: Yeah I think that's really strong, um, both on national level and just in my own city. I um, I kind of, when we started taking our music more seriously, I started going to a lot more live gigs and I wanted to connect with a lot more local musicians and stuff. And basically this kind of musician collective kind of started up in Christchurch, and we're all mates, and we're all from all different genres, and we're all doing different things, and we all see each other around town all the time at events and... it is a real sense of community, and even if you don't

you know personally hang out with any of these people on a private basis, it's this community when you're out and about and you're supporting each other. That's really cool. That's really strong here in Christchurch with musicians. On a national scale, I think like... on a national scale, my brain defaults more to the actual industry, you know, like New Zealand On Air, and the Indies, Independent Music New Zealand, and the NZ Music Commission, and then all the bands, um, and artists that are operating on a more ah popular or professional level... I think there's a strong sense of community there as well. Like I started going to um nights er I guess networking nights that New Zealand On Air would put on, or that the New Zealand Music Commission would put on, and now if I go to anything like, like last year we went to the Silver Scroll Awards, and that was amazing. Like it felt like a real sense of community. Everyone was there, all the government institutions were there, um, all the musicians were there, the songwriters and producers... and it was really cool. I think there was a huge sense of community, and you went outside for your cigarette or whatever and you'd just see like Dave Dobbyn there, or... Tali over there, or Julia Deans... and you just, it's cool, like everyone just goes and you all chat to each other, like 'what do you do? What do you do?', I think it's a really strong sense of community in that respect as well, I think everyone's, yeah. Connecting and excited and wanting to meet new people.. I don't know if at the end of the day if it's driven by opportunity, or if it's just actually you know all supporting each other, but I don't know whether that's just me personally either, but I feel like it's a good vibe [laughs].

[00:36:16.10]Ximena: Right, so you mostly feel like it's like this authentic community rather than people networking to get their foot in the door, or I don't know? Or maybe it's a bit of both?

[00:36:27.10]Emma: Yeah, I think so, I think the people that stick it out and um are actually genuine are the ones that are there, and you know everyone's having a good time, but, you can always tell when, well I can, maybe I have a good sense of character, but I can tell when people are there for the wrong reasons, or talking me for the wrong reason, or... whatever. And I haven't really experienced that much in that more um popular NZ music industry scene. I think everyone that's there is

largely genuine, and anyone who I've met who I don't think are I just stop communicating with them.

[00:37:04.26]Ximena: Right, interesting. And so but do you feel like there is a pressure to kind of be social and make those connections?

[00:37:12.20]Emma: Um, I would say for me personally yes, but that's just because um coming from Christchurch and being quite young when I started getting into it, it felt like a pressure because people were telling me that's what you have to do to make things happen. And I was like, 'oh no! I'm like socially anxious, I can't talk to strangers at all' [laughs]. But you know the more I've gotten on and organically met people and organically networked, then in retrospect now, and being a more confident communicator, I'm like yeah you do have to do that. You can't just like exist in a vacuum and expect to do well, you have to network with people and communicate and meet other people doing something that might be like.. help you out, or you can have like some sort of mutual help out/ connection with someone, or... yeah, networking is super important and I don't feel like it's a pressure at all anymore. But I did when I started out.

[00:38:16.02]Ximena: Mmm. And would there be anything that you um feel like you dislike about the um New Zealand music community?

[00:38:23.25]Emma: Anything that I did particularly really like?

[00:38:26.00]Ximena: No that you dislike.

[00:38:29.15]Emma: That I didn't like?

[00:38:32.18]Ximena: Yup, yup.

[00:38:32.18]Emma: Oh, um. Not... not really eh. You know, the odd individual you come across.... that makes it seem kind of snakey and weird, and then you talk to other people about that person and they're like 'yup I had the same experience', and you're like 'ok... not going near that person again. Won't recommend that person to

other people that are up and coming and looking people to work with'. But nah nothing like major that you know... not any sort of holistic idea about the industry that I don't like.

[00:39:07.16]Ximena: Yeah. So it's pretty positive you feel?

[00:39:09.25]Emma: Yeah definitely. But maybe that's just because we're doing quite, starting to do quite well and I have an optimistic viewpoint on it [laughs]. Maybe it's all just affected by that. If we were trying to release music now and no-one liked it, no-one picked it up, maybe I would not have an optimistic view, but, I think in general I'm optimistic regardless of outcomes, just cos I like doing it. I like making music. So. Yeah.

[00:39:34.22]Ximena: Cool. Um, so from my research the other day I saw that Decades have had support from New Zealand On Air, so with -

[00:39:44.24]Emma: Yup.

[00:39:44.24]Ximena: - with Making Tracks um funds, with grants, so can you tell me a bit about your experience with New Zealand On Air?

[00:39:51.22]Emma: Yeah sure. So um, we've been applying for New Zealand On Air grants basically since we started making music, um, and obviously this kind of comes back to the where your song writing develops and gets better, back when we were starting out, if we didn't get a grant, we'd be real upset, and we'd be bitter and I'd email New Zealand On Air like, 'tell me why I didn't get it, like what was wrong with the song', or you know, um and it was you know years of apply and fail. And people, you know, New Zealand On Air would be like, 'maybe the song just didn't get picked, it wasn't as good as the other ones, keep working at it'. But always very encouraging, they didn't go 'oh who's this annoying girl that's like emailing us every other month being like 'why didn't I get a grant!'", you know? And cos I wanna learn and develop, and so I wanted to know why we didn't get it and what can I do to make us better. And at the end of the day it was write better songs. That are worthy of funding, and are gunna connect with people so... that kind of ties

hand in hand with our song writing development and.. we got our first ah grant when we were Ashei, and that was very very exciting, we were all very emotional about that, you know. After years of trying and finally getting some support, that we don't have to pay for ourselves. Um, and yeah. But the experience now is... totally positive. Um, we still submit songs and get them turned down, obviously, all the time. But, we know like how it works a lot more now. And what songs that we should be trying to submit and all that kind of stuff. And we don't get knocked down as much these days emotionally from it. And also just um having got a couple of grants, and having personally communicated with the team there a lot more, and they're all lovely and they are all very passionate about New Zealand music and they want to see New Zealand artists do well, the whole experience has become way more, you know, a good one for us and yeah. It's fantastic. Not many countries have um government funding for music, so, whether you get a grant or not, we should still be thankful that those things are in place... the support. Yeah.

[00:42:15.05]Ximena: Um and so you said that you got um some sort of feedback from New Zealand On Air when you asked about why you didn't get the grants?

[00:42:25.08]Emma: Yup. I emailed them quite a lot. [laughs]

[00:42:27.17]Ximena: And so they gave you helpful tangible feedback that you could then... use?

[00:42:35.09]Emma: I would say not... entirely tangible. Since uh I guess they can't just come back.. they're not there as an advice service. Um, but you know if they were encouraging and they said, they were straight up and were like 'basically maybe the song is just not good enough, go away and write more songs, more new songs', you know? Um, but when you're a younger band and you've got a few songs together, you're kind of like, 'these are our best songs, and they should get funding, and we shouldn't have to write other songs cos these ones are good', and you can't handle being told that they're not good enough, you know? Which I guess there was an element of that with us, but ultimately, um, it encouraged us just to keep going and writing more songs and try harder, you know? Yeah.

[00:43:27.17]Ximena: Right. So it kind of pushed you in the right direction, rather than I dunno, make... I guess cos I can understand that it would be pretty disheartening to feel like 'this is my best song, why did they not like it, is it really not good?'

[00:43:44.18]Emma: Yeah. And you're basically getting told that it's not good enough still though, and you're like 'whaaaa...' [laughs]. Right in the heart! But, if you don't want to get better as a musician, then what are you doing? So, yeah. Even if it cuts, you kind of like at the time shouldn't let it sit in there too long. Just keep pushing. Going onwards and upwards. Learn from it, develop from it, all that kind of stuff.

[00:44:10.12]Ximena: Right. Um and so do you think though, part of the Making Tracks scheme is that it's intended for what they call 'Broadcasting Outcomes', so did you feel like that was limiting in some ways? Or you think that just made sense really?

[00:44:29.24]Emma: I think it makes sense. Because um, I think it's all quite controversial, because it's like, um you know there's genres of music out there that are quite out there. No vocals, and weird and stuff and even if they're not commercially accessible, what makes them not as valid for funding than a song which has broadcastable outcomes, I get that that's controversial and an emotional touch point for a lot of people, but... this is a government funded program, and the government wants the economy of New Zealand and all industries to be thriving. And the best, I wouldn't say the best bet, or the safest bet, but I guess I kind of would... is commercially accessible broadcastable music. So, to me that makes sense that that's where you put the songs. Um, and there's other funding agencies out there for more alternative and less commercially accessible music, I don't know if there are in heaps of cities in New Zealand, but in Christchurch we've got probably, you know, a handful of other places that, people that treat their music, actually... all music's art forms, but you know as fine art. And making a statement of a performance and there's funding avenues for that as well, and they're not going to go out and do their commercial tour and release music internationally and potentially help the rest of the industry thrive. You know, you look at Lorde and

how much um just how much focus she brought on the New Zealand music industry and probably how much money got injected back into the music industry through a record label... like that's wholly valuable for the rest of us, you know? I think, you know... so I think, yeah. What New Zealand On Air are doing, even though it can be quite criticised by some of the community, and it feels at times controversial, in my opinion, what they're doing is the way to go. Maybe the details and the semantics around it and the process of it could do with some more work, but I think yeah, what they're doing is the right direction and the right aim and the right goal.

[00:46:50.24]Ximena: Right. So when you said the process and semantics might need more work, what do you mean by that?

[00:46:54.29]Emma: Well, cos back in the... like, earlier, cos they've just changed their model a few years ago, like the submission process and the um the criteria to apply and all that kind of stuff, and they've changed it to, I think it's like 60% commercial or mainstream and 40% alternative, um but still broadcastable alternative, but before that, I don't even remember, I can't think if we made any submissions before it changed over, but it was a lot different, and there was a lot more controversy around um the eligibility of the musicians and how you apply, and all that kind of stuff, and so they did all this research and went away and then changed the way it all works, and I think the way it works now is... I mean I can't remember if I had any experience with the previous one, probably our old band member did, cos I think he made most of the submissions, but I.. my gut feeling is that their current process is a hell of a lot better than the last one. And me saying that some of the semantics and processes could be changed is just more just like... um, change and development and, you know, it's always good, you can always make something better, I don't know what they need to do to make it better, cos I don't really have that many issues with how it operates now, but you can always make anything better. So. They'll probably just.. they've got a new um manager now, or head guy, so I'm sure things will change around over the next few years, there will be changing and development and betterment, so it will be interesting to see what happens.

[00:48:38.23]Ximena: Cool. Um, and so do you think when you did get the grants, do you think that that support that they provided you was pretty effective?

[00:48:48.13]Emma: Yes [laughs]. The first one we got was probably not as much because um basically we didn't have any sort of grand plan, we were just releasing songs and just trying to like cross fingers, hope for the best. Um but now that the level we're operating on now and the goals that we have, and our strategy and our plans for what we want to do with the band, it's like... a lot of it we just actually, we just couldn't do it without that support. We need it to operate on the level that we want to operate on. Because we don't have a label, and we're paying for it all ourselves, and then it puts the pressure on us to try and find private funders, and um so New Zealand On Air's support helps take the heat off that a little bit.

[00:49:40.26]Ximena: Mmm yeah. Absolutely. And so and they just... and that was like mostly just financial support that they've provided you, or do you feel like they've provided support in other sorts of ways?

[00:49:52.10]Emma: Um, just like, tangibly, just financial support, but I mean, if they like what we're doing now and they're funding it and then... I don't know what they're saying about us to other people that could have some sort of influence, you know, they might be talking about stuff to people in a positive light, they could be offering support there that we aren't even aware of that's ultimately helping. But they also have um, they have a guy that works there, Jeff Newton, he does like a lot of um radio support, so he takes um the funded songs to radio and tries to get radio to pick them up, and so there will be a bit of support in that respect as well, and they also do their, um, it used to be called the Kiwi Hit Disk but now it's called New Tracks, so it's a CD that they put out once a month of like the 40 new songs that are coming at radio, and that gets sent out to every radio station. And I think that's an awesome supportive thing that they do as well, and then they put it on their Soundcloud, and they have quite a lot of followers, and so they give you a bit of digital support as well, so yeah it's not just the money, you know? It's other things that they do.

[00:51:06.02]Ximena: So your song, 'Terrified', was on the New song CD disk?

[00:51:16.10]Emma: Um yeah that was on the New Tracks CD. Yup. But we also um had a PR person who took it personally, just our song, to radio as well. So, um... but that was more targeting the bigger radio stations. Whereas the New Tracks CD is really good because that makes you accessible to like all the radio stations in New Zealand, big or small. And you don't have to waste, well not waste, but you know spend a lot of time and investment into contacting and finding all those radio stations yourself. They just have the CD that shows up and they listen to it and they go 'oh we like that song yeah we'll add that to our playlist', so we don't have to take all our time to contact them and be like 'oh we've got this song, do you want to play it', you know? So that's cool. Yeah.

[00:52:03.18]Ximena: Kind of covers that bit of admin work as part of being...

[00:52:08.27]Emma: Yeah exactly. So it's really useful to get on that, but it's not enough to be on that to kind of um appeal to the bigger radio stations, so we still had to hire our representative that goes in and talks about the song, and you know gives it more of a personal touch and can go in there and tell them a bit about us, and we have a good relationship with our PR person, so she really wants to champion us, so yeah it's quite good. And then because we have that extra thing that we have to do, um, then again the New Zealand On Air grant helps support that as well, because there's part of the grant that is for recording, you know, part of it goes towards recording the song well which we paid for upfront and then the New Zealand On Air grant gives us the money back so then we've got the funds cleared up that we can then go and put our own support into getting a song out there, you know?

[00:53:05.11]Ximena: Mmmm right. So it kind of trickles down into...

[00:53:08.21]Emma: Yeah [laughs]. It's all very complex the ins and outs, the ins and outs of funds and what they're helping... [laughs]

[00:53:15.27]Ximena: Yeah yup. So I guess from what you're saying, it seems like you think that government support bodies such as New Zealand On Air and the

New Zealand Music Commission are um pretty important for the New Zealand community?

[00:53:26.19]Emma: Yes, yeah yeah without a doubt.

[00:53:29.25]Ximena: Cool. Um, so you're also quite active on social media with the Decades um pages on Facebook and I saw that you had a Snapchat account as well, and so can you tell me a little bit more about this, so who manages it, and why do you feel like you need to have a presence on these platforms?

[00:53:52.17]Emma: Right. Um, I manage all of it. Basically yeah I manage basically everything in my band, um, I have three other band members that are um not very internet-savvy, they like their privacy, you know. But they still understand the importance of um being able to be reached and talked to, so yeah I manage all of that stuff, I do all of our posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat... um, we have a Periscope as well, which is like a live-stream thing, um and the importance of social media... it's just, I don't know, it's just awareness right? Like keeping in people's mind frames, um opening up the conversation and the communication lines for people that want to reach out to you. I think it's important to be able to be um found and communicated with by people that like your music. Uh, as a music fan myself, if I want to follow what bands I like are doing and what they're up to, if they're gonna be playing in my city, if they post something funny, I then connect with them on a deeper level, it's like a personal, like a personality connection not just the music, and I just think it's really important, I think it's hard to explain, but...

[00:55:18.07]Ximena: Right, that it's almost just a necessity?

[00:55:21.01]Emma: Yeah, well it's just ingrained into our society now, right? Like, even just on a personal level like who doesn't have a Facebook and who doesn't use it as a form of communication and, and meeting new people or yeah it's very ingrained into our psyche now and I think it's only going to get deeper and deeper [laughs].

[00:55:42.19]Ximena: Right, yeah.

[00:55:44.15]Emma: So I think it's important for bands to utilise it.

[00:55:47.01]Ximena: Mmmm. And so do you think, like I guess from doing graphic design work, you probably feel like that helps aid you in um creating that brand identity, like an effective brand identity online maybe?

[00:56:03.24]Emma: Yeah, yeah definitely. And not just like aesthetically but um like I did a Communications degree so it's also like you know what you say in the words as opposed to just the images. Yeah, so that's helped me learn how to be effective at that, but I think, yeah, you can always get better at that and just ah see what other people are doing to reach out to their fans on the internet, and take some awesome ideas...[laughs]

[00:56:31.14]Ximena: Do you feel like also your, I guess maybe your band brand identity online that that maybe sometimes seeps into your own personal Facebook accounts or other social media accounts? Or do you feel like you kinda keep them quite separate?

[00:56:51.10]Emma: Um, for me personally they are kind of kept separate, they are definitely for the guys, um, they barely barely use social media as it is personally, um, but I think even just on my personal Facebook it's important for me to kind of uphold that same level of this is what I do and you know, it's still mostly about my music. I'm not posting on my personal Facebook about what I designed at work today, you know? Yeah. It's still like that, it's just not as much of a.... what's the right word for it, curated. It's not as curated on my personal Facebook, it's more of like my actual um casual take on what I'm doing with my music and stuff like that and what I'm up to, and personal stuff. But. Yeah. It's still like definitely my personal Facebook and the band Facebook have some connections, they are the same voice, and it's quite apparent that our social media is me, a lot of people now when they comment back on a Decades thing they'll literally be talking directly to me and mention my name, cos they know that it's me that posted it. So yeah. They definitely correlate together, my personal social media and the band's public one.

[00:58:19.00]Ximena: Right, sort of crosses over a bit?

[00:58:22.07]Emma: Yeah definitely.

[00:58:22.07]Ximena: But then I guess what you've said, you know, you maybe feel like you curate the band one a bit more than maybe your social -

[00:58:30.10]Emma: Yeah, it's a lot more strategic as to what I say or do on the band one.

[00:58:33.29]Ximena: Right, right. Um, and do you feel like you kind of plan that at all with the rest of your band, or you just kind of direct that?

[00:58:41.26]Emma: Um, I direct it, but I fly things past our manager [laughs]. Cos you know there might be things I'm excited about telling our fans about something that we're doing, and then... he'll be like 'no we can't tell them that yet cos when it actually happens the impact will be reduced', you know and all that kinda stuff, but the guys like, me and the guys have been together in this band for like ten years now, so there's... yeah. They trust me and they trust our manager and they're just like... uh one of the guys who is a high school teacher he's.. he'd prefer me not to swear, um [laughs] you know, cos it could look bad, his principal could get mad about that, but that's about it, like, yeah. The guys are totally happy with me posting whatever... cos they go 'well we don't know about social, I wouldn't even know what to say', you know? So... they just fully entrust me with that responsibility, and yeah. I'll try and get them in on it, especially on Snapchat, they get involved in that a bit. But on Facebook and stuff, often when the time that I'll want to make a post I'm not with them, so it might just be a photo of me, or something I've designed and posted, but they don't really get seen that much on Facebook. But. I try and post when we're together, like when we were recording the album last year, it was about all of us, you know? But it's hard, it's hard when we all work full-time, I can't just like drive over to one of their houses and be like 'let's do something funny for social media!' [laughs]. Yeah.

[01:00:12.25]Ximena: Is there, do you feel like there's pressure from your manager to post, or that you're pretty happy to do it, and so the manager just leaves you to it?

[01:00:24.13]Emma: Um, I'm definitely happy to do it, like I've always been... I've grown up in the computer internet age, so that's just a natural part of my communications and expression. Um, but manager definitely encourages it and to keep it active and regular and strategic in that there's certain types of posts you make on Facebook and there's certain types of posts you put on Twitter and there's certain types of things you put on Instagram and you shouldn't make them all the same, so like he's pretty good at, you know, directing me in that sense, but he doesn't really need to... he doesn't need to baby me much for it cos it kind of comes natural for me, so I feel absolutely no pressure to do that [laughs].

[01:01:05.09]Ximena: Mmmm. Right. That's interesting. And so you feel like the internet has helped you a lot as a tool for your band?

[01:01:11.22]Emma: I'm not sure about that actually [laughs]. I'm not sure if it's helped as a tool for the band. I think um the internet is really good for just... I don't know. Like in terms of exposure I don't think it's helped all that much. Um...

[01:01:31.21]Ximena: Oh really?

[01:01:31.21]Emma: Nah, I think that's more like, that's more of a um a field again for electronic and pop music, I think the internet's really good for them, um, for us it's more of just a way to personally you know connect with our followers and just more of an awareness thing and keeping in their minds that we're still here. But um yeah. And yeah it's just a way for people to keep up with what you're doing, I don't think we've really had much success with it in terms of a tool for discovery.

[01:02:09.15]Ximena: Right, oh ok. So you feel like people probably have found out about your band through the radio maybe, as opposed to the internet?

[01:02:18.15]Emma: Yeah. Radio or just... you know, um friends of friends of friends, and um through supporting um other bands in shows or just playing gigs with

other bands and stuff like that... I mean when we started releasing music a few years ago, or, six years ago or whatever and we started you know making music videos and putting them on Youtube, I guess that kind of was a wee tool for discovery, we noticed a bit of an increase in people from other countries um following us, but... most of our fan base is New Zealand and that can only be attributed to broadcast and playing shows here. Not the internet. Yeah.

[01:03:01.11]Ximena: Um and so what do you think about.... because I noticed that you haven't got any Decades music on Spotify um yet, but I guess cos you're still in the process of producing that album, um, but are you wanting to release it on Spotify and iTunes, is that where you see it going?

[01:03:23.01]Emma: Yeah definitely. I try and push it out to as many places as I can on the internet. I think... I used to be really against Spotify when it kind of first started getting popular, like 'I don't understand why this is a thing, like why aren't artists getting paid lots', you know, but now as a user of Spotify I think it's absolutely brilliant and it's amazing for discovery of new music and stuff like that so I absolutely would want to be on there, it's not about a royalty payment, it's about, I dunno, it's about people connecting with music and discovering new music and I think if we're... if Spotify kind of supports the culture where it's about new music discovery then that's awesome. That's fantastic. That's what we need.

[01:04:11.12]Ximena: Right, absolutely. So you think like it's great in terms of just the exposure it will hopefully provide for Decades?

[01:04:19.04]Emma: Yeah! Yeah cos you know you have someone might be listening to some other rock band and it will be like, 'if you like this band, other people are listening to this', or you're listening to your favourite band on Spotify and you kind of want to mix it up a bit so you go 'start artist radio' and then it starts like a radio station based on that artist you're listening to, and Spotify curate that with similar artists and I think it's just an awesome tool for music discovery. So yeah I think Spotify is fantastic and I'll put my music on there when it's out.

[01:04:50.07]Ximena: Cool cool cool. But do you feel like in some ways does the internet not help you? Or like feel like a burden, or make your music work harder, or is it mostly just positive experiences with the internet?

[01:05:02.04]Emma: I think it's mostly just positive, but it is kind of annoying, you know, when you're focused on a tour or a recording and... you want to kind of let people know what you're doing, so it can be annoying feeling like you have to do it like 'oh we haven't made a post for X days, I feel like you know we need to make a post, but we're not even doing anything today, like what can we post about', like it gets kind of draining in that sense. But a lot of other artists are naturally way better at doing that, they might have someone in their band or that is hilarious and they just make more personal posts that are fantastic, but for us it's like the focus is, you know what's the band doing that's interesting or entertaining, and that can be quite difficult to um kind of create when you're kind of focused on other stuff.

[01:05:47.04]Ximena: Right. There's that pressure to still create that content maybe.

[01:05:50.20]Emma: Yeah definitely. And some people are just naturally better at it than others, like my boyfriend he plays in a band and like he is just a character and he's hilarious and he has all these crazy ideas and he loves making his own original content on the internet and then he just absolutely posts it on his band page even though it's not really relevant to the band, because it's just affirming the personalities within the band, and like their kind of ethics and just their brand. Whereas none of us are naturally kind of um big personalities like that or interested in doing stuff, like that's kind of more of a struggle coming up with content that ah is relevant but still interesting to our audience... I don't know it's hard to explain.

[01:06:41.16]Ximena: Mmmm no definitely that makes sense. That like maybe it might come naturally to some other people more than...

[01:06:47.26]Emma: Yeah like our social media is probably more like promoting the band or what we're doing at the time, whereas a lot of artists are really you know hilarious characters, and their presence on social media is actually more just about who they are as a person and that's like a massive tool for them because then that

becomes kind of... that they almost become the product, and that's why people, you know, they love following them and they get a huge social media following because of just their personality. And that's what their content's based on, whereas our content's based on like actually the band and the music. Which.... I wished that we had, that I had a personality where I could just be hilarious on the internet, but I just don't. And you can't force it, so...

[01:07:33.02]Ximena: Mmmm right. Yeah. No definitely. That's interesting. And so aside from any promotional social media work that you take part in, what other work do you do as a musician that isn't simply writing music?

[01:07:47.06]Emma: Uhhh not much really. [laughs]. Yeah like um doing Decades stuff really takes up most of my energy with music, um, I love when opportunities come my way, I try to take as many as possible like if anyone ever offers me to do like a solo gig on my own or whatever, I kind of jump at the chance to do that because that's a side of my skills that I haven't really been able to work on while we've been doing a lot of band stuff, um and yeah. Jams, like down at the bar where lots of Christchurch community musicians get together like just going down and kind of participating in those and just kind of exploring music and live performance that I'm not used to, cos you know we're used to just performing our own songs over and over again and it's all down to the minute detail, so like the kind of chaoticness of going down and just jamming and singing... but I actually don't do much music stuff outside of band, like at all. Just no time.

[01:08:58.25]Ximena: Right. So Decades kind of fills up most of that music work for you.

[01:09:08.18]Emma: Yeah. But I like that, because then that becomes my musical identity, and that's my baby and that's my artistry. So. I'm totally happy with that, that's kind of ideal really that the music's like, my approach to music and the other guys' approach to music hasn't shifted focus on something else and then therefore potentially taking away from the commitment or successes of Decades.

[01:09:35.12]Ximena: Right, absolutely. Do you feel like you do, for Decades, do you do much other than the social media stuff, do you do much admin, or organisational work? Or do you leave that mostly to management?

[01:09:47.13]Emma: Um, I do, I pretty much do all of it, like our manager um he's more you know, he's more about getting the opportunities and he directs us and he develops us and but in terms of the actual detail or organisation of something, like for example, um, he called me up and he was like, 'Villainy are going on tour, do you want to be the support act? I need a yes by the morning'. Sort of thing. And so he's like hooked up that opportunity, um, and he's gonna support us in the organisation of it, but at the end of the day, like I'm booking the flights, I'm booking the hire car, I'm figuring out where we're going to get amps from, you know, so I still do all the admin and all the organisation and stuff, but he kind of curates the opportunities, and provides the strategic direction and he's the big ideas guy, I'm the kind of try and help make it happen guy.

[01:10:48.26]Ximena: The logistics type of...

[01:10:50.26]Emma: The logistics guy [laughs]. Yeah. Now that we have our manager on board he does a lot more of the big picture stuff, but I do everything that is required. The guys write, practise, and perform. I'll run stuff by them and we will discuss things but I do all the execution of everything. I'm a bit of a control freak, I like stuff to be done in a timely fashion and I can only trust myself to get done what I need to get done. I'm hoping one day I can start letting go of this affliction ha ha.

[01:10:53.12]Ximena: And so do you enjoy doing that side of things, or it just kind of needs to get done so you do it?

[01:11:00.07]Emma: I enjoy it. It stresses me out, but um, to me I wouldn't get anything done if I wasn't stressed, so stress is a good thing for me, and yeah. I'm a bit of a control freak, so even if Tom, even if our manager was like um uhh 'this is happening, this is going to be a thing', he's like 'hold fire we'll sort it out in a couple days', I need to start working on it as soon as that phone call has ended. Like I just

really like organising stuff and getting all the ducks in a row so everything goes smoothly, I hate the idea of uh falling over or failing at something, because the organisation wasn't like.. the effort wasn't put in there. So yeah, I really like doing it cos it's kind of like a safeguard really.

[01:11:50.02]Ximena: Right, right, so it kind of helps you almost maintain control as an artist that you're making sure that everything is going to plan?

[01:11:58.09]Emma: Yes [laughs]

[01:11:59.01]Ximena: Even if it's not necessarily just writing music, it's still all that part of making things happen.

[01:12:05.04]Emma: Yeah definitely, I don't think I could ever just be like a, 'I'll write the songs and I'll just turn up to the studio and record them and I turn up to the show and play the show,' like I need to be integral in how that came together. Yeah.

ENDS

Appendix 4: Transcript of interview 3

Brad, member of the band Two Cartoons, based in Auckland.

[00:00:00.02]Ximena: Um, so to start with, can you talk me through an overview of your involvement and history in New Zealand's music industry?

[00:00:10.16]Brad: uhh, ok. My involvement in the music industry started probably when I started the band Two Cartoons with um my friend Isaac at Otago University. We started that back in 2011 and started playing shows around Dunedin around the uni, there's a pretty healthy scene down there, um, lot's of opportunities for young bands that are looking to start out to play gigs, which is really good. And then we got picked up by some managers and the funding scheme had just changed over to Making Tracks, quite recently from the old scheme, uhh so it made it pretty easy and open for us to be able to apply for that funding. Um, we had to have like.. we had to meet the criteria bla de bla... have so many friends on Facebook, oh so many likes on Facebook, and play to x amount of people, which we managed to get done, with the help of the managers cos they were sort of like 'oh this is what we need to do here' and that sorta thing, which is pretty good, um and then we got given \$10,000 of funding, um, which kind of kickstarted the band, so if we hadn't got that, I don't think we would have, well who knows what we would have done, but uh it happened really really early on for us, um and we were sort of a bit of an unknown band, and so that sort of pushed us to make it a bit more serious. Because it sort of started out as a joke, we just entered like a battle of the bands competition, and we were like 'ah yeah it's fine'. Um, so yeah, that was like pretty important in the history of that band, which we're still doing now. Um, and since then we've received funding twice after that, as well, actually three times, technically. Um but in terms of like history of where I come from within the music industry, like, that was the sort of defining moment when we launched off there I guess. And since then, I've done a bit of work for ah Rockquest, doing mentoring stuff and helping out with them, um and did some mentoring in a school in Dunedin as well through the Music Commission. Um... what else have I done? I'm trying to think now. Uh... I made the Rockquest, getting funding.... we played at something else.... it

was years ago... let me rack my brain now to remember.... um. It was Going Global I think it was called?

[00:03:17.27]Ximena: The Summit?

[00:03:19.09]Brad: Yeah yup. We played that, which was pretty awesome for us, because that introduced us to Courtney Barnett's manager. And we ended up opening for her when we went to Melbourne. Um, so that was like woah. We played this little like ah sort of Summit thing and then ended up opening for someone who's like massive now, we had no idea at the time. We opened for her in London as well. So it was just a good connection that was made there I guess. Umm... I'm sort of just giving you a rundown of where I've like touched on in certain things in the industry, but I'm not sure if you want more like.... in depth into other things, or...?

[00:04:03.11]Ximena: Yup nah that's like... I guess it's a good starting point...

[00:04:06.20]Brad: You get an idea of what I've sorta done, yeah.

[00:04:09.26]Ximena: Um yeah absolutely! And so you do your band work, and then outside of the band work what sort of other work do you do to keep the you know... pay the bills?

[00:04:25.02]Brad: Oh pay the bills? Ummm well obviously the band began while we were at uni. So when we were studying it didn't really matter then. But then we got picked up by a label, I guess because we'd sort of had had a bit of success over the years. Um, largely due to the fact of the funding, which helped out a hell of a lot. And we ended up being picked up by a label and went to Thailand to start recording an album, because the label had a studio there. That was in our last year of uni. And then once we finished uni, well I finished uni but Isaac didn't get to finish his degree... uh we got sent straight over to London, so. That was paid for by our label as well, so I've just been working odd jobs basically, making coffee seems to be the uh the go-to job for making sure I've got a bit of spending money. Especially now that I'm back here. It's sort of like... trying to do the music thing, but

there's never any money in music. Until you really get to like a big level. Um, even bands that I absolutely adore and admire, I'm like these guys are amazing they've got fricken tonnes of listens and their shows are sold out, like they still have to work day jobs. So. It's just like a reality I guess. It's... being a musician you're going to understand that you're gonna work a shitty day job, you're gonna be poor [laughs]. Um I think I'm looking into ways that I could incorporate more um of the actual music side of things into a job, like I'm really interested into getting more into the recording and production side of things, cos I'm sort of wired that way, um, Isaac whose in my band, uhh does a lot of writing, he used to do a bit of music journalism for like electronic music blogs and stuff and get paid for, just like little odd jobs like that that you can do within the industry that still gets you a bit of cash but they're never like a proper sort of career path or anything you can expect to... unless you're super lucky, you know and become an amazing sound engineer or something like that, but generally I think musos are pretty happy with being poor and working day jobs.

[00:06:44.07]Ximena: Right so it's kind of odd jobs, here and there, like freelance type of thing?

[00:06:50.09]Brad: Freelance sort of stuff, yeah yeah yeah. Just finding other ways to apply your skills while you're not playing music, but you know maybe like I said you can write really well, or you're sort of a computer nerd and you can do the production thing, or anything else like that. Promoting, a lot of my friends I think Anthony Metcalf who is a bit of a... he's been around the Auckland scene a little while. He's promoting a few shows, and he used to play in a band called Glass Owls. Um lots of people sort of do a couple of things, or either work on the radio as well, like that. I've got a few friends that are doing that as well. Um, so yeah. I think it's just a bit of trying to keep the music thing going, when it's not just you know trying to make it a bit more of your day job than just your passion sort of thing I guess.

[00:07:41.05]Ximena: And maybe figuring out more sort of lucrative things where you can still use your passion but that might not just be your own band music?

[00:07:53.05]Brad: Absolutely yup. Yeah I think uh musicians obviously being creative types are always trying to figure out a way of like coming up with a way that they can support themselves through their own music but maybe not necessarily be tied to a major label, or something like that. Like a lot of it is going super DIY now. Um, and a lot of people are trying to figure out ways to exploit that, that's a bit more DIY I guess. Like running everything through Bandcamp or something like that, and keeping it also inhouse, it's a lot easier now. Especially for us. We sorta went down the label route, but now that we're gone from there, we're looking at moving it all back in house and trying to make our own merch and do all that sorta stuff again. Which is exciting and a bit time consuming but at the end of the day like if you can find a creative way to make some merch that is a bit different and sell that to little cost to you then it's all good cos you're not spending it, you're not wasting someone else's money like a label or something like that. I've got a friend's band called the Naenae Express and they made tamarillo chutney with a little tag attached on the, with a download code to the EP. It's like random stuff like that it's like oh you know it's kind of part of being in a band but you've gotta come up with a different idea that's a bit unique so that you've got a bit of selling point I guess.

[00:09:26.11]Ximena: Cool. Um so you mean, by inhouse you mean kind of managing it yourself?

[00:09:32.26]Brad: Yup.

[00:09:32.26]Ximena: Right.

[00:09:35.15]Brad: Basically yeah. A lot of bands I know these days are all either self-managed or like managed by a friend who's not affiliated with a label or anything like that. Or a management company.

[00:09:45.22]Ximena: And you're still with a label now?

[00:09:47.26]Brad: Technically we're not. Um yeah. I don't know how much I can say about that because I haven't signed anything to release myself from it yet, but no.

We're not dealing day-to-day with uh our label, Far South, anymore. Uhhh... I'm not sure -

[00:10:11.18]Ximena: Was that relationship up until you -

[00:10:13.07]Brad: Up until we left, cos when we were in London we were there for two years, we had two year working visas. But then coming towards the end of that, uhh we'd finished recording the album, we were still getting our last mixes through, they paid for the whole thing, then obviously our visas were coming up and we were like 'well, what's the plan?' and they were like 'well we can't afford to keep you here', because after two years none of us had ancestry to live in UK, so, we would have had to have them sponsor us, and they couldn't afford to do that. But that was ok. We were ready come home after two years, it was really nice, so... it's kind of like we got the most out of that. They paid for our entire time in London, flights, rent, uh got some guitars out of it as well. We were incredibly lucky, and had two years, made an album and another EP as well, which we're free to do what we want with, but obviously the label still owns it because they paid for it. So any money that we make back has to go back to them, but I mean that's ok, it was all sort of learning experiences for us anyway. It was a really really amazing way to learn about what being in a band is like and what the industry outside of New Zealand has to offer. The first time I think we ever worked with someone like a PR agency and meeting managers that were working for bands that were bigger than us, just really getting a bit of an idea of what is out there and then taking a few of those ideas, especially the stuff from PR, was the most interesting stuff for us. Um, the digital stuff, and getting your music on blogs all that sort of thing, creating the hype essentially. A lot of those ideas are so easy to do, like in-house, with your own, like by the band themselves, you know. That was... and it seemed to generate the most interest and excitement, as opposed to the old-school way of like, 'we're gonna go down this press sort of thing', like if you've got the list of sites which people pass around from time to time, it's a pretty invaluable way to be sending your music out there. The internet is like an incredibly powerful tool for the music industry now, and I think everyone knows that, they've known that for a long time. But it's so easy for bands to be able to do it themselves. Which is pretty cool.

[00:12:48.09]Ximena: So the PR agency, they kind of... you mean like they kind of showed you how it was done?

[00:12:53.12]Brad: We just sort of watched over their shoulder a little bit. We were like 'oh ok this is what they're writing for a press release, and this is the sort of people that they're sending it to', and uhh we have a few of those contacts through other people that have shared lists with us, like which isn't entirely the done thing to do, you're not really supposed to be like, 'oh yeah this person gave me this massive list of contacts here', because people hold that pretty close to their chest. But I think it sort of shows more like what we were looking for. Um. And like how to go about that sort of thing, just by dealing with them. And so we were taking notice and not just being like 'well there's a PR agency they're just going to do their thing and we're just going to do sit back and you know twiddle our thumbs', like we were sort of watching very closely so that we, cos we knew that maybe there would be a time that we weren't with the label, and we'd have to do the stuff ourselves, so we were very very fortunate to be able to watch that and learn basically.

[00:13:57.00]Ximena: Right, so you kind of saw it as a learning experience.

[00:13:59.04]Brad: It was massively as a learning experience, yeah. I mean that's the only way we could look at it cos you couldn't have these big visions of being a rockstar, you know, and just not pay any attention to what was going on around you. You sort of had to be like 'well at least we can just learn how to do this while we're here' was the idea.

[00:14:18.20]Ximena: Right, so that when you weren't with the label maybe potentially in the future that you could fall on your feet a bit?

[00:14:25.03]Brad: Exactly. Cos we sort of knew it was coming, after a while we were like 'oh maybe they will keep us here maybe they won't', but we could see it was going to be too expensive and that's what happened. So like, just gotta be ok with it and move on I guess which is what we did.

[00:14:39.07]Ximena: What was their idea with sending you there?

[00:14:42.04]Brad: Um, they had just started the label. So basically we got tangled up into it because we shared a manager with um, his name is Scott Muir, and he managed The Chills, and The Chills got picked up by the label because uh they, David Teplitzky, the sort of main guy on the label he was a massive fan of The Chills, and got them to play at his uh New Year party one year. And then was like 'well I want to start a label'. And he's a pretty wealthy sort of guy, so he had the cash behind him to be able to do it. And then because we shared a manager we got picked up at the same time and they were like 'hey we've got this band that I also manage', that was Scott, saying that um 'you should get these guys on board as well', so then they paid for our second EP and obviously the third and the album as well. And that was... that was 2012 I guess. And, yeah. They're based in the UK, and.... what was the question again sorry?

[00:15:56.00]Ximena: Why did they send you over there?

[00:15:57.23]Brad: Why did they send us there? Because the label's based in the UK. We got told while we were in Thailand that they wanted us to go to London, because they were going to be basing the whole thing there and a couple of other guys that David was dealing with were already, they're English and they used to work for Sony. Um so the label was kind of set up there, and was starting to be run out of there, and yeah they basically were like 'yeah if you want to come be on board with us then we'll send you to London', so we were like 'ok!' [laughs]. Sitting in a studio in Thailand being like 'yup we'll go to London, why not?' Cos it was sort of a pretty awesome opportunity for us and we just took it and ran with it. Yeah.

[00:16:44.18]Ximena: Sweet. Um, and so and they are kind of more of an independent label, rather than....

[00:16:51.27]Brad: Yeah they're a bit of a strange one because yes they're an independent label, but they had a lot of connections that used to work for major labels, so like Sony and a couple of guys from Universal. They had really really good contacts. But they were mainly sort of contacts and there was no one like

really running the label as a like a proper business for a while. Um, it was a bit complicated and it got all sort of like, uh we didn't really know who were talking to some of the time, they were great for us, they paid for a lot of stuff, but structurally it didn't really work that well. I'm not sure if they knew exactly what they wanted to do. Um, which direction they wanted to go. Uhh but we still got a lot out of it. It just wasn't like because it was the first time that they were doing it as well really. They'd just set the label up. They were sorta still finding their feet at the same time as we were like 'oh what do we actually expect from a label like this?', um but yeah. I mean it was all good in the end. Like we still got a lot out of it. It just wasn't... yeah. It was a bit of a strange label sorta set-up, it wasn't quite what I expected because they weren't an established label to begin with, they were still sort of finding their way, I guess. Yeah.

[00:18:13.01]Ximena: Right. There wasn't sort of like a structure that you could walk into, they were more experimenting?

[00:18:18.05]Brad: Yeah, kind of making it up as they went along. But with a lot of money behind them, which was kind of weird. But uh worked for us, cos it made it a lot easier.

[00:18:30.05]Ximena: Yeah definitely. Cool. So now I want to hear about your current day-to-day life in the music industry, so take me through like a 'week in the life of Brad' in regards to all of your music-related activity.

[00:18:42.19]Brad: Ok. Uhh I will talk about when we were in London I guess, because right now I'm sort of in a bit of a downtime -

[00:18:58.16]Ximena: In-between stage, yup.

[00:19:00.10]Brad: Uhh yeah, so down-time now, just did the tour, which was I guess that was pretty full-on, not everyone's on tour all the time, but we did like a month in January when we got back from London. Um which we organised ourselves completely while we were still living in London.

[00:19:23.09]Ximena: So not much help from the label?

[00:19:26.12]Brad: No, because by that point we knew that we were leaving the label. So in our downtime in London, because uh when we were living there we were only sort of working like three to four days a week, cos that was all we needed to do. Cos the label was paying our rent. So we were like well we're gonna be leaving the label soon, so let's go and uh start organising this tour. So Isaac and I just sat down with laptops and sent a whole bunch of emails off to people in NZ that we'd played for before, or just looked at other bands tours, like friends of ours, and said 'oh it seems like everyone is kinda playing here', so just contacted everyone and pieced it together. It was pretty easy really. Just sending a whole bunch of emails off. All that sorta stuff. I'm lucky that Isaac's really good with the words and that sort of side of things. So he manages to make emails and all that kind of thing sound pretty good. So between the two of us, uh we both worked 3 or 4 days per week while we were there. And then...

[00:20:30.18]Ximena: Like cafes?

[00:20:31.00]Brad: Cafe, bars, yup whatever we could get our hands on that was close in the area. And then, uhh we'd rehearse a couple of times a week when we could, um gigs, we.... the label organised a lot for us, but we also uh tried to just sort of book a few ourselves. It was a bit weird, like we weren't too sure like what we were supposed to do and what they were doing. But generally, like a normal week for us, we'd be working a few days a week, rehearsing in the evenings, and then maybe we'd have a gig on that week as well. That would be like kind of a normal to busy week. A lot of down time when we were sort of like 'right well.... no gigs this week', and then you're like 'well do we need to rehearse', and sometimes it's like kinda hard to find that motivation if you don't have someone pushing you or something to work towards. We got suuuuper lazy for a while [laughs]. I'm sure a lot of other people can attest to that. But um yeah.

[00:21:36.13]Ximena: So this was post album recording?

[00:21:39.26]Brad: Yeah kinda... the album was recorded like..... when did we finish tracking that.... April? Or May? Yeah. And then mixing the whole time after that. So I was always really involved in the mixing side of it because I'm into that sort of thing and production. So I sat in on most of those mixes. So that was going well up until we left and like I think we got the mixes finished sort of around October and then uh they would go off to get mastered after that. Um, there's always, it was always sort of a bit up and down, of course, you can't always just be super super busy all the time, I'd LOVE to be, that would be amazing, and I think that's something we're trying to work on, is like, you know having stuff to work towards and keeping ourselves busy, otherwise it can be sort of like all or nothing, being a musician. We'd be like 'well we've got a gig this week so like shit we'd better rehearse for it' but like if you actually get into a proper practice regime and like have stuff you're working towards constantly and it's a lot easier to stay focused. Cos we were just... we fucked around a lot while we were over in London. And partly because we were like 'woah new city' -

[00:22:56.28]Ximena: 'Let's explore' -

[00:22:58.17]Brad: -'explore and hang out and have fun', which is totally sweet like, you couldn't expect us to not do that sort of thing. But had we had a bit more a structure of being like 'ok this is what we need to be doing', like a bit more focus, maybe we would have got a lot more done, but. Hindsight, you know.

[00:23:14.16]Ximena: Right. And by getting a lot more done you mean like writing more songs, or -?

[00:23:19.18]Brad: Writing more, getting tighter, playing more... I wish we played a lot more shows while we were over there. And looking back we should have just started organising it ourselves. But we weren't really too sure what the label was doing for us and what we were supposed to be doing for us, so it was a little bit confusing at the time, um, but yeah like I said I can't complain too much because they really helped us out a lot. But I think we could have made more out of that time there. But you know there's still ways you can go back and organise a tour. Which I think now that we've sort of had that taste of it, we feel a lot more

comfortable travelling anywhere else and booking a tour overseas, whereas a lot of other people are like 'I've got no idea how the hell to do that', but we've been lucky, we've had a few times, like we were in Melbourne for a month, and just crashed on people's couches, and sort of just tried to survive there and book our own shows, and we were like 'oh it's actually doable', it's really fucking hard sometimes but you can do it. Um, and London was more or less the same in a lot of ways. Like, now that we've sort of seen that we're like 'okay, let's base ourselves in Auckland, and then if we want to go try and book a tour and do Europe, like, why not? We'll do it', like it's not that hard to organise that sort of thing. And yeah. I think that's some of the things that we learnt while we were there. And now that we're back we're like 'oh, we can do that'.

[00:24:57.01]Ximena: Yeah, totally. I guess just reaching out and making those connections with people?

[00:25:00.23]Brad: Basically yeah. Yeah that's like one of the most amazing thing about travelling and being in a band, you do meet a shitload of people. And it's so easy to stay in touch now, you know you've got Facebook and everything like that so.... you can always be like 'hey, we're coming back over in 6 months, can we crash at your place, we're gonna play a show, we'll put you on the door', easy.

[00:25:23.20]Ximena: Cool cool. Um so what do you like and dislike about working in the New Zealand music industry?

[00:25:28.13]Brad: Ummmmm, I think it's a... I think it's very supportive of New Zealand music. Like everyone, because it's so small, uh everyone sort of knows everyone, and there's not a lot of like super competition between bands. Whereas in the UK, when I was playing shows over there, it was like, every man for himself in a lot of ways, it wasn't like this sense of community and scene that there is here. Um, maybe that might have just been particular to London. Cos I didn't get to go and check out any of the other sort of uh smaller towns. Which is a bit more like what I'd imagine New Zealand would be like. But I think that's one of the best things that New Zealand has going for itself is the scene and community is so strong, and everyone sorta, a lot of people know everyone, and wants to help each other out,

and you know most people especially in Auckland are like in four or five different bands, people from bands are recording other bands in that scene, um so like one guy Jonathan Pearce who plays in a band called Beths and played with Anthonie Tonnon for a while, as well, he's like doing amazing recordings with most of the Auckland bands around here. Um, and it's just like a local thing, like everyone knows that they can, you know, go to someone that's local within the scene and get something done. Which is really cool. Um, the negative aspects of it? Uh it's really hard to say, because I haven't sort of been back long enough to actually get a proper feel for it, uhhhh....

[00:27:20.25]Ximena: I guess maybe just prior to when you -

[00:27:24.09]Brad: Uh yeah prior to when I left um let me think.... um I mean I guess the whole sense of community and being so close can be a little bit inhibiting as well because everyone's sort of is in everyone's business as well. But I can't... I'm trying to think of a good example of like the negative aspects of it... ummm....

[00:27:52.11]Ximena: Like do you find the structure of working in the music industry, like not knowing, I don't know, like a lack of security, or do you think that that's actually something you enjoy?

[00:28:05.16]Brad: Mmmmm, no I don't think I have a lack of security or anything. What do you mean?

[00:28:11.28]Ximena: Right, you kind of like the flexibility that the arrangement offers you, rather than it making you feel stressed?

[00:28:18.19]Brad: Totally, totally. I think that's sort of the beauty of it in a lot of ways. I haven't done a lot of like 'work' in the industry for a little while, like I did the Rockquest stuff and I did the um New Zealand Music Commission stuff in the schools, but that was like uh totally freelance kind of thing. And for me, that's all I really want to do right now. Because I sort of want to focus on making music I'm really really happy to be involved and help out uh you know on a freelance basis,

but uh right now I haven't really looked into working full-time for the industry as such yet. Sort of more just like a player in the scene I guess.

[00:29:09.19]Ximena: Yeah. And going project to project... that's kind of maybe a structure that you are preferring at the moment?

[00:29:15.16]Brad: Totally. Yeah yeah yeah. Like having the flexibility to be able to do that I think is one of the coolest things about New Zealand and what makes it super unique. Cos we're such a small country, like you can play in this project and play in that project and get around pretty easily. And it works. Yeah.

[00:29:36.18]Ximena: Yup. Definitely. Um did you feel working with the label like there was any like restrictions on your, I don't know, that they would have an element of control, or that you were very free to do what you wanted?

[00:29:49.09]Brad: We were pretty free to do what we wanted. Which is why I say we were incredibly lucky. With, despite all of the uh things I didn't like about the label, like the kind of disorganisation some of the time, they totally let us do what we wanted to do. We were like 'we're gonna make this kind of album' and they gave us complete creative control basically. The only thing that they weighed in on was uh choosing singles to release. Because obviously they had to have some sort of plan in mind and they had people that were advising on that, but even then, like we made that a pretty democratic process I guess. Like we had most of the people from the label come around and we all sat down together and listened to tracks and then talked about it all together, we were like 'this is what we want for the single, this is what I want, blah blah blah and why', so. It was pretty cool being a whole part of that thing and not just someone going 'ok these are the songs, this is the one you're gonna put out here bla bla bla', we had one that was like a little bit of a scuffle over it because uh it said fuck a lot in it, uh and they were like 'well, we really want that one to be the single cos it's really good, but we might need you to like edit the fuck out of it or redo it', and Isaac was like 'no way, you can leave it in or not have it at all'. And looking back that was probably a little bit childish from us, we should have just been like 'ah yeah whatever we'll do the edit', but uh they didn't really mind they just sort of backed off and were like 'ok well we'll just choose another

one'. Which was cool, a lot of labels would have been like 'well no, we've paid for this and you are going to edit that thing', they were like really really cool about it and just were like 'ok, well that's fine we'll just choose something else then', which was pretty good, it was really nice to be able to work like that.

[00:31:53.14]Ximena: That's really interesting. Yeah cos I guess they were kind of looking at it from more of like a business perspective of thinking, you know, 'this can't play on these sorts of channels because of the language', but then that's really interesting that they were like 'but whatever we're just going to leave it'.

[00:32:16.04]Brad: And I guess like sometimes you just have to put yourself in their shoes and be like 'ok I get why they're thinking like this', you know? Instead of just being like 'ohh squares up there in their suits, bla bla bla'. But I don't know, I don't think I'd ever want to write music with that sort of idea in mind, of being like 'well you know I can't...', it's not creative then, you're just making music for money's sake and that's... a bit fake. I think it's important to understand the other side of the story, but don't let that influence the art, otherwise it's... yeah.

[00:32:55.26]Ximena: Definitely. Um so if I mean I get the sense that you're pretty happy with the um with the industry, but if anything about the industry was to make you want to quit as a musician, what would that be and why?

[00:33:08.15]Brad: Ummm what would that be? I guess I don't really have a lot of like sort of decent uhh stories or anything that I can back up anything but like you do notice like a little bit of like bitching about certain people here and there and I'm just like 'oh man', I kind of just try turn a blind eye to it. But like I said, because the community is so small and everyone knows everyone, the downside of that is there are some like little rifts that develop between certain people, and um, I heard some shit was going down in Dunedin recently, ah with certain people that had very strong feminist views and that was taken out of context by some other members of the Dunedin community and just blew the whole thing apart; people wouldn't play shows with other people... sorry, I'm being super vague on it, because I was told the story by someone else in the band, and I don't know it well enough to actually be like 'I'm naming names here' sort of thing. But it was to do with uh with like

militant feminism being taken way out of context by people and some people in other bands being like 'well hey we didn't mean anything bad against you by saying or playing with these guys if they said something wrong, we're just playing music'. Um, sorry for the really vague example. That was like one of the most recent ones I heard of down there, um and then there are like certain people that bicker and bitch behind your back. But people do that in any sort of community or industry I think. Um I don't think it shows massively in Auckland, um, unless you're like really inside the whole thing. Which I'm not. I know a few people around but I haven't been back here long enough to sort of put myself back into it. Um, in terms of my involvement though, hmm I'm not too sure. There's nothing really that I can come up with off the top of my head at this point.

[00:35:36.03]Ximena: Right I guess cos you're still kinda getting your head around getting back into it in New Zealand, so...

[00:35:44.28]Brad: Yeah. And I mean I didn't really notice a lot of negativity in that sort of way. Because we had a manager I guess who was actually shielding us from it a lot of the time. Which is probably why -

[00:36:00.12]Ximena: Right, guided you in a way -

[00:36:00.12]Brad: Yup. yup yup. And yeah guided us but he was doing all the talking for us. Um and we kind of just stayed out of it for the most part. Which was nice because I don't really like doing that sort of side of things.

[00:36:18.13]Ximena: You mean like the networking side of things?

[00:36:20.06]Brad: Networking side, like selling the band, you know, and being like 'ok let's get you on this', you know, we got the video played on like Air New Zealand flights and stuff like that, being all over that sort of stuff, and dealing with those people, um I never dealt you know directly in that sort of sense, we always had our manager doing that for us, so, I was pretty lucky to not have to worry about that kind of thing. So yeah.

[00:36:45.01]Ximena: Right. But you feel like that's maybe something you have to get into a bit more now if you're doing -

[00:36:51.27]Brad: Yup. We sort of try to divide and conquer within the band, so like Isaac does a lot more of the PR sort of face-to-face email-y sort of stuff side, whereas I tend to stick to the production and that kind of thing. But yeah I think I have to step up my game a little bit.

[00:37:09.15]Ximena: Right, so he's a bit more of that extroverted person who can just make those connections, he's a bit more comfortable with that?

[00:37:17.16]Brad: Yeah a bit more comfortable with the managerial side of things I guess. I mean I could do it but it's one of those situations where you just get a little bit lazy because the other person's doing all that, and you're like 'well I'll just leave all that to you then', like he runs most of the Facebook and that sort of thing.

[00:37:32.14]Ximena: Right. But I suppose also if he kind of naturally pick that up -

[00:37:37.17]Brad: Yeah he kind of naturally gravitates towards it, yeah yeah yeah.

[00:37:39.11]Ximena: - then you're gonna be like, 'well I'll leave you to it' -

[00:37:40.24]Brad: Sit back. Yeah.

[00:37:44.08]Ximena: Yeah. Cos I suppose that's kind of a hard thing to um you know force in a way? If someone has the ability to just....

[00:37:53.13]Brad: Yeah. But I would get more into it I think, if I ever have another project that I don't have someone like Isaac to fall back on, then yeah I'd just suck it up and do it. I'm not a complete idiot when it comes to social media and that sort of thing, so ah I'd happily get into it because it is such an important part of being in a band or being a musician these days, like the connection to social media is huge. I mean there are... there's a few cases of bands that are like very silent on social media, but I think they are very lucky to be hyped in other ways by other blogs

without them having to say, blogs or publications or whatever, you know. But most of the time, like you've gotta have some kind of presence I think to be....

[00:38:45.13]Ximena: It's important?

[00:38:45.13]Brad: Yeah super important.

[00:38:47.08]Ximena: Um so you touched on this a bit before, so you think New Zealand has a pretty strong music community, um so can you tell me about the extent of your involvement in this community?

[00:39:00.18]Brad: Uhhhhh yeah. I mean, like I said, currently I've only been back a little while, so I've made some connections with old friends that are still like doing stuff within the community. But up until before we went away I guess when we were still in Dunedin, um my main involvement was playing with Two Cartoons, doing the work for Rockquest which we did a lot of, which felt really good cos that was sort of like kind of giving back to the community and getting paid a lot of the time as well which was pretty good. And seeing the young bands coming up and helping out and mentoring with those bands as well. Which was a pretty cool sort of thing set up by Rockquest, the whole like 'here's an established band, they're going to come and talk to the guys that won this regional thing and talk about what being in a band was like', and it was great.

[00:40:06.14]Ximena: And they approached you for that?

[00:40:06.14]Brad: Yeah cos Isaac did quite well when he was in high school with his old band, and so he already had the connection there, and so when Two Cartoons started doing stuff, we played the guest spot for a lot of those Rockquest finals and stuff like that, he'd do a bit of judging sometimes, I'd do a bit of like drum tech or guitar tech sort of stuff, um yeah we were just involved in... we were like their go-to South Island guys for a little while. Which was pretty handy and good for us cos it meant that we could piggyback tours onto the back of that sort of thing as well and it seemed to work pretty well for us. Um, but yeah apart from that and then the school thing I mentioned earlier... what else did we do, in terms of community

stuff... Um yeah I mean that's kind of it. My main involvement with the New Zealand music industry I guess is as someone who plays in a band, apart from that little bit of mentoring sort of stuff there. Most of my stuff has been playing in a band.

[00:41:19.16]Ximena: Um and so, what you, um, I've got another question that says 'what do you like/dislike about the New Zealand music community', and you kind of went into that a little bit before, um, I'm wondering if maybe in the future with that... how it's so small, but you feel kind of maybe on the periphery of getting back into the New Zealand music community, do you feel like there is a pressure to network and socialise to be able to -?

[00:41:46.08]Brad: I think you have to, yeah. I think uh it's... it's small but it's too hard to kind of go at alone. It's a lot more uh beneficial to have those connections and you know just keep it, yeah I mean I wouldn't want to be acting on our own, I want to be part of the whole thing that's happening. Especially here in Auckland, um I think there's... you can visibly see like there's something quite cool going on. It's really small. And it's maybe not what it used to be a few years back, but I can't really comment on that cos I wasn't really here for it, but um you know people are like oh you know there's no good guitar bands right now, and I'm like 'what do you mean there's no good guitar bands, there's some great guitar bands! I just went and saw one the other night'. Um, but yeah I think just there's a lot going on in Auckland, especially at the moment but it's not just like guitar band sorta stuff, there's like a whole range of music going on, and I think, just going to lots of shows and meeting people that are doing that, you realise that like, you start seeing the same faces around, you're like 'oh! Ok'. There is like a little thing happening here, and I think we especially want to be a part of that. Cos it's so much more interesting having a bit of a community that goes to the same gigs.

[00:43:13.13]Ximena: Right, so you mean in like a listener sort of community, or -?

[00:43:18.10]Brad: Listener community, and people that are playing as well, like everyone goes to each other's shows, and supports everyone, which is really cool.

[00:43:27.22]Ximena: So like musicians supporting other musicians, so same faces in that sort of sense?

[00:43:32.05]Brad: Exactly. Yeah. Absolutely. There's a bunch of people that are making music that are looking for other people to sort of connect with as well, and I think that's the way to do it, is going to shows and meeting people through other avenues like that, which is good.

[00:43:51.01]Ximena: And so how would you compare those communities between Dunedin and Auckland?

[00:43:54.04]Brad: Ummm Auckland obviously seems a little bit more like.... just... diverse I guess. Dunedin was very like centered around the University. So a lot of the bands would be from the music school, which I actually went to, I studied music down there, but I didn't do the whole like paper where you get thrown in and they're like 'hey here's your band, start a band' sort of thing. But it definitely helped that there were a lot of bands that were doing that, and I know a few bands that started that way. There was a bar called Refuel, which seemed to kind of be like the main place where people would play. Um, and pretty much any local band would play there at some point. At least three or four times a year. But there was a bit of a lack of venues in Dunedin, which kind of like funnelled everyone into mainly Refuel. Um. But then when like a couple of different venues opened up, people would sort of flock to it because it was something new. We were lucky we had a band that we would play with a lot called Males, um and they're really really cool to hang out with and they came and played in our band for a little bit and then we left and they're still doing their thing down there. But yeah I guess it's a lot smaller the Dunedin thing, so like everyone knows everyone's business down there. Which can be a little bit like *sigh* sometimes. And I think yeah I mean it's still a strong scene, I haven't been down there recently, we toured down there, but I wasn't there long enough to actually get a feel for it again. So it would be interesting to go back and have a look.

[00:45:57.14]Ximena: Do you think there's more opportunity in Auckland?

[00:45:59.26]Brad: Yup, I think so. I think there is, I think Dunedin is a great place to be a band if you're down there studying, or maybe if you grew up there, but most people seem to be moving up to Auckland at some point, cos there's just like more going on, there's more people to make connections with. if you're into collaborating, you know it's a good launch pad before going overseas, doing at least a bit of a stint up here, you know, if you want to go and move to Melbourne, or you want to go move to London after that, then that's great. But I think there seems to be some good stuff going on in Auckland at the moment. There's just a bit more, like I said, diversity I guess. And a bit more different sort of stuff going on than the smaller scene like in Dunedin. Which is not to say it's not strong, it's still really great down there. But there's just more happening here, which is good.

[00:46:54.20]Ximena: With a bigger population, more venues -

[00:46:54.20]Brad: Which you'd kind of expect. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:47:00.05]Ximena: Um yeah for sure. Um ok... so I believe you've had some support from NZOA with some of your work, so can you tell me about your experience with NZOA and um whether or not you think the support they provided you with was effective or ineffective?

[00:47:20.04]Brad: Cool. Uhh yeah so like I said at the beginning, we got funding really early on for the band, which was like amazing for us, cos it actually pushed us further than we probably would have pushed if we hadn't got funding. We would have been like 'ah yeah well you know we play music on the side bla bla bla', bit of fun, bit of a joke sort of thing. But because we got the funding early on, we got \$10,000 to record a song and do a video, that ended up more or less paying for our first EP. And the Better Coast video, which got played on most of the music networks, and got used for some Air New Zealand ads and stuff like that. Like we made the most of that money absolutely. And it sort of showed us really really early on into the band's sort of career that we were going down there, but like ok this can be really really helpful and can actually sort of push you, it definitely pushed us and made us sort of focus and be like 'we should actually take this seriously now'. Um the application stuff was pretty straight forward for us, because I think it works

for bands that are playing shows, if you had just started out a project like obviously you need to get some traction before you can get through the sort of gatekeeping parts of it, um but because we had already started playing a few shows and could prove that like it was, it never seemed to be an issue for us the application side of it. And I think that scheme that they currently have now works really well. Cos I often look at bands that are receiving the funding and I'm like 'great! That's really cool, I went and saw those guys last week', you know they'd been going maybe like 6 months to a year sort of thing, which is long enough that you're not just giving money to someone that's going to piss it away and not take it seriously, but then again you are funding bands like from a sort of grassroots-y kind of level, and you're not just being like 'well let's just give the money to you know 'the Feelers' or whoever again because we know they're gonna make us money back', the fact that uh New Zealand On Air, the Making Tracks side of it at least I guess, um really champions like bands that are starting out and young bands as well, which is awesome. And the split between alternative and commercial is pretty healthy as well, like I think previously, a lot of it was like 'well if it's not going on you know commercial radio then we're not going to fund it', but now it's like a lot of more alternative I guess like b-net sort of radio-friendly bands are getting the funding. And it's way more, well I can only speak for myself, but that sort of side of things is more my taste I guess, so it's nice to know that those bands can get funding, like cos we did. Which is great.

[00:50:40.16]Ximena: Right, that they're kind of supporting a healthy diversity?

[00:50:43.01]Brad: Absolutely. I think they've kind of nailed it, in terms of uh the spread between commercial and like alternative bands and then uh who can receive the funding, it seems pretty fair to me. Everyone that gets it I'm like 'yeah, they deserve it'. There's not that many people when I'm looking down that list and I'm like 'they got funding?' [laughs]. Yeah. It seems to make sense now at least I think, which is pretty cool.

[00:51:12.09]Ximena: Um, do you think it, have you felt ever a bit limited though, I suppose how NZOA funding schemes are for music with 'broadcast outcomes' I

think is the term they use, do you feel that that might limit some of the creativity, or do you think that that makes sense?

[00:51:36.04]Brad: Ahhh. I see where you're coming from with that sort of thing. Uh it's never ever limited it for me because I tend to write pop music. So that's fine I guess most of the stuff that I write I'm like, 'I guess that might be able to get played on radio', like, I don't know, like sometimes you're like 'wow I just wrote a really great song' and it's super hooky and stuff, I think Two Cartoons was lucky because a lot of our stuff was very hook-heavy and like had that pop flavour to it, which I guess made it pretty um -

[00:52:16.01]Ximena: Made it have those broadcast outcomes?

[00:52:16.01]Brad: Have those broadcast outcomes. Exactly. I guess if you were a band that was doing more like ambient stuff, or sort of like pushing the boundary a bit, sort of experimental stuff, like yeah it would be a bit more, uh limiting in that sort of sense. Um, but I can't really speak for what that would be like because I unashamedly write pop music [laughs].

[00:52:45.27]Ximena: No shame in that! And so each of the times that you applied you were successful?

[00:52:49.04]Brad: Yup. We were. Which was super surprising. Yeah, the first one was the biggest surprise, because that was the most amount we've ever received, it was the 10 thousand. And like I said that paid for um the first EP and the video and then after that we got the video funding, which I think is six thousand? Yeah. Uhh and made another one, which got played again, and then we got funding again, we got Bubblewrap funding, and we actually shot that video in Melbourne, because uh we were looking for a director that had done some stuff with Grayson Gilmore before um and he was living in Melbourne, so we were like 'oh let's go shoot it over there', so we went over there and shot the video.

[00:53:43.11]Ximena: Cool.

[00:53:44.14]Brad: It was amazing, it worked really really well.

[00:53:47.16]Ximena: Yup. And that wouldn't have happened without the funding?

[00:53:50.09]Brad: No way! We wouldn't have even dreamed of doing music videos without the funding behind us because uh well yeah. I know you can, people get Go Pro's and go do that sorta stuff all the time, but um we sort of just made videos for the songs we got funding for luckily. Which actually pushed us to do that, otherwise we probably would have just been like 'meh', not worried about it. And I think it actually gave us a lot more exposure than we would have sort of ever dreamed of had we not got any of that funding. So it was really good.

[00:54:23.28]Ximena: Yeah. Cos with the funding then it helps you get plays -

[00:54:28.07]Brad: Yeah. Like sort of automatically get at least like considered for a lot of like the C4 sort of stuff, what do they call it now? Four?

[00:54:35.29]Ximena: Yeah it's Four.

[00:54:36.28]Brad: Whatever it's called. Um yeah. And it's just another thing to put up on Youtube to have you know content there. Cos content is key these days.

[00:54:48.05]Ximena: Right. So kind of just widens those avenues for where your music can be?

[00:54:51.23]Brad: Absolutely, yeah.

[00:54:53.01]Ximena: Cool. And so in terms of the wider music community, what role do you think government support bodies, such as NZOA and the NZMC play?

[00:55:02.10]Brad: In terms of the wider music community... um, well... from what I know of at least, apart from the Making Tracks side of things, uh I think they do a fantastic job with uh overseas grants that you can get, which I think is part of the Going Global thing. I'm not entirely like tuned up on exactly what it is, and I have

never applied for any of that sort of stuff, so I don't really know, but I know a couple of bands that have got it before, which seems to be good, but yeah I don't really know a lot about that sort of thing. And I guess that's something that we would look into if we were ever going to do another tour or something like that. Because I know they do offer money for bands that are trying to play overseas or something like that...

[00:56:01.06]Ximena: Yeah I think it's Outward Sound.

[00:56:02.17]Brad: Outward Sound! That's the one. Maybe that's what we played at... no...

[00:56:06.27]Ximena: I think Going Global was the summit, and Outward Sound is the programme.

[00:56:12.06]Brad: Yeah that's the programme, yeah.

[00:56:14.01]Ximena: Um, but so you think that they're pretty important and integral -?

[00:56:19.27]Brad: Absolutely, I think the fact that we actually have that as an option is amazing, because I know a lot of countries don't have this sort of support for their own music scenes. And it's a lot more controlled by, you know, you've got to be signed to a label cos they're going to pay you to go and do this tour, like the fact that you can apply for funding just being an independent band, or being an independent label I guess, means that there's so many more opportunities for New Zealand music to actually get out there and sort of try and push our brand a lot more I guess. Rather than just... you know if we didn't have that sort of thing, everyone would just sort of stay in New Zealand because it's very easy to stay in New Zealand and not leave [laughs]. Um. Same could be said for like people that like don't want to move out of their hometown, even people who like live in Dunedin are like 'oh I'll just stay in Dunedin and like keep making music here', but it's like no! Push out. Like, you gotta be ambitious, I think having those options

there, for funding, actually makes it more viable to be ambitious and push out and be able to spread your music more globally I guess.

[00:57:29.13]Ximena: Right, absolutely, so just providing the support for those things to happen. Cool. Um and so going onto um looking at social media, um so you're quite active with social media I noticed. So with like website, Instagram, Facebook... you said that Isaac mostly managed that?

[00:57:51.23]Brad: Isaac mostly.. yeah definitely. Um yeah I think you're crazy not to, being in a band these days. We uhh we're not like the best at social media, we used to be a lot better, I think.

[00:58:08.15]Ximena: You mean just with frequency of posting?

[00:58:10.15]Brad: Just with frequency of posting, I find that like quite hard, I'm just like 'oh man, do people really want to hear about this?', I don't know I get a little bit cynical about that sort of thing sometimes. Uhh but yeah like we definitely use it a lot. Um, especially.... what do we have, like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, we use the whole lot, Isaac kind of manages most of that it's more sort of his domain, and the website we started as well, um which, I don't know, it's a bit weird, websites these days are sort of like, what role do they play? [laughs]. But for us we kind of made it a sort of central hub of like this is where you can go, and then link that off to be able to get the music on iTunes or Bandcamp or Spotify or whatever and uh a lot of it was more about places to post photos with a bit more text that wasn't just Instagram and it wasn't like a Tumblr sort of style thing, but it kind of incorporated a bit of the two? Just sort of streamlined it a bit so it worked for us and uh I think we plan on hopefully having some merch on there, but maybe that can link into Bandcamp as well. There seems to be a lot of third-party sites now that every band is using that makes it sort of a bit obsolete to have to worry about like setting up your own webstore on your own website. It's easier just to link to these sites that everyone's using now and you know actually work really well um so yeah our website kind of is just like a landing page with a bit of information and a bit of sort of posting about sort of stuff. But yeah. Uhh the need for a website seems to be a lot less like important now, there is a lot more social media stuff happening I guess. But

yeah um I'm not really the best one to be talking about social media sort of side of things, but I understand the importance of it, absolutely. Yeah.

[01:00:17.18]Ximena: For sure. Do you, so do you know if much planning goes into what Isaac posts? Or he just kind of -?

[01:00:21.24]Brad: In the beginning we would just post random shit. And that was, I guess when it was a bit more fun and we were like actually really frequent and onto it. Um but now we kind of try and well yeah I mean we just sort of got kind of sick of just posting all the time and always being on Facebook I guess. Uh but definitely when we were in the UK we would try and time the posts so that we could catch the right audience at the right time, um and he looked up -

[01:00:56.29]Ximena: In terms of the time difference?

[01:01:00.08]Brad: Time differences, and just like when people are on their computers, just sort of like the sort of 6 o'clock sort of time or whatever. We would try and time things to announce shows or announce a single or something like that around then sometimes. Um obviously the PR company that we had over there was sort of in charge of when we would announce a single sort of thing, but we'd always post about that on Facebook as well, keep that as a big part of like our involvement in that sort of thing, yeah.

[01:01:36.28]Ximena: So it maybe started to get a bit more streamlined and band-activity focussed than maybe when you first started?

[01:01:44.17]Brad: Yeah, yeah. Well, because you've just got more to talk about-

[01:01:48.04]Ximena: By 'random shit' did you mean like anything-

[01:01:51.16]Brad: Aaaaanything. Like a Pokemon article that we'd see. Sometimes we do sort of still post that stuff. And I think some people like when bands post about that sort of thing, um I think it still is important to like have those non-music

posts. Uh but I've never been super good at that sort of side of things, that was more like Isaac was good at tying it all in together.

[01:02:16.06]Ximena: Right. Just kind of this personality of the band?

[01:02:20.29]Brad: Yeah! It is more about the personality of the band yeah. That's something that I need to get better at I guess.

[01:02:26.18]Ximena: Right. I guess kind of yeah and so in that respect, and also with the band-related stuff, so I guess he kind of curates an aesthetic in a way, or do you think he doesn't really think about it, that it just-

[01:02:44.09]Brad: I think he knows what he's doing. I think he kind of does curate an aesthetic, but it's also just like an outlet for his I don't know interests and ideas. And we're lucky that we're both pretty similar and into the same sort of shit, like so he kind of does that, just posts about anyway. More like the, I think the sort of stream-of-consciousness crap goes on Twitter. Sometimes. And we kind of try to make a bit of a conscious effort to like separate it and keep that sort of side of it, just you know, talking shit sort of thing. Do the Twitter sort of thing. Facebook is more for just like actual announcements, um and the odd random thing from here to here. And then Instagram obviously image focussed stuff. We'd always post stuff, especially when we were on tour, we did a lot of stuff um like at sound check we'd always do a post before the show, to promote that for the evening, seems like really basic sort of stuff, but you know you can just forget it and then it's gone, but you've gotta take those opportunities when you've got them. Which is why I find it reaaaaally hard to like keep the interest up on the Facebook when you're having these sort of like down times sort of thing, when, you know, they're down in Timaru and they're doing their own thing, and I'm up here, so it's like 'uh we're not doing anything we can't really do any posting', but yeah. Isaac might be doing some stuff. Yeah.

[01:04:17.21]Ximena: Right, it feels maybe less authentic?

[01:04:20.03]Brad: Yeah, I think way way way less authentic if there's nothing going on. So it all ties in to keeping focussed and like trying to get shit happening.

[01:04:30.01]Ximena: And you do some posting on your own personal page as well?
Or-

[01:04:34.04]Brad: I don't. I kinda keep that separate. I'm not super into Facebook as much I guess as I used to be, um sorta like try and remove myself a little bit from it, so I don't really post much on my personal page at all to be honest. So yeah. I uh I kind of oversee the Two Cartoons stuff and like keep up with that, sometimes Isaac's like 'can you write a post about this' and I'll be like 'yup sure sweet done'. But mainly he uh handles most of that side of things.

[01:05:11.13]Ximena: Right. So he's more the social media guy. So also before you said um that you feel the internet has been a great tool for you, um so I guess that's in regards to, not just putting music on like Spotify or iTunes but also in terms of blogs and that sort of thing?

[01:05:38.18]Brad: Yeah.

[01:05:39.17]Ximena: Right, so it's promotional but also-

[01:05:42.07]Brad: Yup. I mean I think it's a bit ridiculous now to try and be a band and not use the internet in some way. It's part of like everyone's life right now. So there's yeah there's a tonne of opportunities for bands to use it to an advantage, and I think we did reasonably well with it. Blogs are important, but not the end of the world, and you can kind of get a bit caught up sometimes and like, 'ooh they posted about us, and we've got x amount of plays on Spotify', but at the end of the day, what does it actually mean? Because you're not making money out of Spotify or Soundcloud plays. I mean you are, but it's tiny, you know? And uh it's hard to tell if like that's actually building you an audience or not. You know? Sometimes it's a bit hard to um... yeah you can get a bit confused by the whole thing, I certainly did. Of hype that goes on on the internet, or in terms of like play counts and stuff like that, you think like 'wow this is great! Like you know we've been mentioned by this and

this and that', and whatever, but you've just gotta keep a handle on it and just be like 'ok cool'. It's all good, but at the end of the day, you've still gotta make the music and play the shows, you know? Like it's super super helpful to have that stuff out there, but I think some people get a bit carried away with it sometimes and think it means more than it really does. I guess there are some things that are worth more than others, like if Pitchfork or someone posts about you, you're like 'fucking yeah, that's great', um but you know there's I guess, all press is good press in a lot of ways, like... so there's just a lot of it out there right now. Um, we've definitely been like posted on heaps of, many times um by blogs that I've never even heard of. Which is awesome, but you've just gotta be like 'well that's cool, that's really great', and it is what it is, like it's great that there's an option for people out there to talk about the music they love and then of course like you've gotta like repost all that sort of thing and and yeah. It's great. But it's hard to tell like what... if it makes an impact on your sort of life as a musician or not.

[01:08:12.10]Ximena: For sure. Yeah right. So you can see all this exposure that you're getting, but then actually does it actually convert-

[01:08:17.16]Brad: It's hard to translate what it actually means, yeah.

[01:08:21.04]Ximena: -into financial gain.

[01:08:22.10]Brad: No, no no. Yeah.

[01:08:24.26]Ximena: Or an audience. Like it might not necessarily translate directly to those things.

[01:08:28.25]Brad: Yeah. It's like the whole thing of like you have an event on Facebook, it's like woah you've got like 200 people attending and then you know like 50 people turn up for the show. You're like 'what? I don't get it', like... yeah that's a pretty shitty analogy, but you get what I mean.

[01:08:47.09]Ximena: No, that makes sense, I think it can be, there can be quantifiable things that you get from the internet, but actually in terms of like, does it really reflect the real life sort of following you might have?

[01:09:03.15]Brad: Yeah, not really yeah. But it's still absolutely valuable, and you'd be stupid not to use it.

[01:09:09.09]Ximena: Right yep for sure. It's kind of a necessity in a way?

[01:09:13.10]Brad: Yup definitely.

[01:09:14.06]Ximena: Mmm. Um and also aside from any promotional social media work that you do, so what other work do you do as a musician that isn't simply writing music, so any sort of admin, management sort of thing?

[01:09:30.00]Brad: I don't do any admin that sort of stuff personally, um -

[01:09:37.25]Ximena: I guess the label kind of did most of that -

[01:09:38.18]Brad: The label did most of that sort of stuff. I'm gonna start -

[01:09:43.14]Ximena: Be picking it up maybe?

[01:09:43.14]Brad: I'm more in that technical side of it. So like I said I really want to get more into uh the sound sort of side of things, recording and maybe doing some live sound stuff. That's like what I'm more interested in, is doing stuff for the community in that kind of way, um building guitar pedals as well, like that sort of technical side of things is great, but I haven't been able to be like actually, I'm just still learning that kind of side of it. I guess uhh I can speak for Isaac again and say that he does, he writes band bios because he's a bit of a wordsmith, he's really good at like 'hey, tell me a bit about your band and I'll write your like profile for you', so he's gonna do that uh and sort of charge a small amount for the people if they want that sort of thing. Um and like I said he writes for, he's written for a couple of publications in the past, so I think he'll probably do more of that. Um. But yeah my

sort of side of it's more the technical side. I don't know how comfortable I would be about being like 'I'll record your band' yet, cos I'm still kind of like learning that sort of side of it.

[01:11:06.22]Ximena: And what about in relation to your band, you mentioned at the start that there's more of this kind of DIY like self-management, is that what you see in terms of your band? So you see that that's kind of maybe the future of Two Cartoons without the label? So doing more of that self-management?

[01:11:22.04]Brad: Yup yup. Yeah definitely. That's kind of what we decided when we were in London and we realised and found out like 'ok cool the relationship with the label is going to be ending, so let's just do it ourselves!' Because we had that two years of watching the label do it's own thing, we were like 'oh. We could do that.' We just need their little connections here and there, like and we've kind of got that. So uh...

[01:11:58.08]Ximena: Those doors have already been opened?

[01:11:58.08]Brad: The doors have like kind of been, like a little crack has been opened, we're like 'ohhhh ok'. But I wouldn't say like the door is open and we can walk through anytime, but like it's pretty close to that. Uh but yeah, I think we just realised like why not just do it ourselves. Like, the money side of it we can figure that out, um but it's doable. We kind of got off to a bit of a weird start because we were uh picked up by managers quite early on. Um. But I think we were capable the whole time of actually doing it ourselves anyway. But we sort of got picked up into the whole thing of having the label and having a manager early on that we were sort of like 'oh ok they'll just handle that', but now we're like 'no we can do this', it makes sense. Like why would you pay someone else to do it when you can do it yourself and have more... especially when you're at this level, I guess when you get a bit bigger you need people to help organise tours and stuff like that. That makes sense completely. But you should still be able to record your own demos at least, book your own shows, send your stuff out to blogs, like I think most bands can do all that now, but we sort of want to of course do all that a bit more for ourselves.

Cos yeah, it makes sense and we've got no money now [laughs]. I can probably speak for a lot of bands.

[01:13:31.15]Ximena: And so do you see that as kind of maybe a chore, or it's something that just has to be done?

[01:13:35.17]Brad: Ummmmm, no. I don't think it's a chore. I think it's easy when it's your own project.

[01:13:44.16]Ximena: Because you're excited about it?

[01:13:44.16]Brad: Because you're excited about it. Um, but yeah. I'm lucky I think of having someone else to bounce ideas off and sorta share the load a bit, if it was purely just me doing the whole thing I'd be like 'oh my god' [laughs]. Maybe I would think it was a bit of a chore. Because I work in a bit of a duo, well have been working as a duo for the last two years, and with other people, that makes sense to be able to do it that way. You can share the load and it's good, it's easy. Yeah.

[01:14:16.11]Ximena: You have a buddy to be able to do it with, rather than just this solitary thing.

[01:14:22.21]Brad: Mm-hmm.

[01:14:24.02]Ximena: Cool. Something I was gonna ask before as well, so how would you compare the live music scene in New Zealand to the one that you experienced in London?

[01:14:32.05]Brad: That's a good question. Ah I came to the conclusion that the New Zealand music scene is waaaay better.

[01:14:41.28]Ximena: Really?

[01:14:42.17]Brad: Yeah. I think so at least. Because it does have that community and that sort of scene. London was like really like baffling a lot of the time, because I

couldn't find that sort of like grassroots level of bands being able to put on their own shows and dealing directly with the venues and that sort of stuff. It seemed like every venue that you wanted to play that was, you know, kind of like one hundred to two hundred person, you know your standard sort of small to medium-sized venue, comparable to somewhere like the King's Arms or Whammy Bar, somewhere like that, uhh to play those places, they were all controlled by um promoters, and promotion companies, a lot of the time. And you had to go through them to be able to play the venue. And they'd have all these weird rules, like, 'oh yeah cool like we'll put you on this bill for the night, and ah you've gotta bring like 50 people and we'll pay you 100 pounds' or something like that. It's like, you can't bring 50 people to every show that you play, and then as soon as you don't like meet their sort of target they're like 'well you know we're just not gonna have you back to play again'. It was a very like negative way of doing it rather than sort of like opening the doors and being like, 'yeah come on, come try out, don't worry about it' sort of thing, it was like, 'well you can't play here unless you're gonna bring this many people'. That was like the main places, obviously, getting on supports was a good way of doing it, but you've kind of gotta have a bit of a connection there to be able to do that, we were lucky like we got the Courtney Barnett one when we were there, which was really good. Um, but yeah. It was hard to be able to play those small shows um in like the sort of proper venues without going through those promoters. It was just like 'ugh', it was really frustrating at times. Um, and there's.... I guess there was a few bands that were putting on their own shows, in sort of like warehouse communities, and that sort of stuff, cos that's where we lived. We probably should have put on more shows like that, but we did a few of them, and they were great, because obviously being a much bigger city like there is more people to go to shows. Um, and we put one on in the cafe that I worked at there, which was like super easy. Got a really good turn out. But there was already like a decent community of sort of creatively-minded and arty people where we lived in Hackney Wick, so there was plenty of people that would come out to the show anyway, cos it's always good to see some live music around there. And it wasn't really a done thing, so maybe we should have like exploited that a bit more, but... it's a lot to organise sometimes. We were like, 'far out', it would be nice to just be able to go to a venue and be like, 'hey can we play here?', like 'yuss'. But maybe that might be to do with the fact that there's so many more bands in London that they've

gotta have this kind of like gatekeeping thing. But it does make it really hard to like break into it and sort of get some traction going.

[01:18:04.22]Ximena: Especially if you're relatively new to the city.

[01:18:06.26]Brad: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah so I sort of found it a little bit like negative in that way, whereas...

[01:18:12.28]Ximena: Yeah, and slightly limiting as well?

[01:18:15.18]Brad: Mmm yeah. I mean like Auckland and most places in New Zealand that I've ever played like don't have anything like that, you know, like you're the band, either you or your manager or whoever contacts the venue and says, 'can we play, you know, next Saturday in May or wherever' and they go, 'yeah cool the date's free, turn up and this is what it costs' or maybe it doesn't cost sometimes, and yeah it's all pretty simple and straightforward here I think, which is a really really good thing for growing uh New Zealand bands and artists I guess.

[01:18:51.12]Ximena: Right, yeah whereas maybe there's just more of that pressure for ticket sales and that sort of thing there, the guarantee of having people in the venue.

[01:19:00.05]Brad: I think London's more set-up for bands that are more established. Generally. And that are touring with a promotion company, and that sort of thing. I'm like, 'ok yeah, that makes sense'. It's the big pond, and it's where the big fish go [laughs]. Yeah. So. Yeah that's just the way it is I guess.

[01:19:22.28]Ximena: Mmmm. I guess it's a cool experience that you had though.

[01:19:24.06]Brad: Yeah. I probably wouldn't say that London's the best place to go for a band that like is just starting out or like hasn't really got like a bit of a thing going, because it is a bit like woah, it's not like here. Where you can go and just book those shows like that. You've gotta actually have your shit a little bit more together and the promotional side of it is really really important to get people to the

shows. Um, here we're lucky that we have people that just seem to turn up to some places a lot of the time, which is really good. But yeah you've gotta put a lot more effort in over there to make it work. It's hard. Yeah.

ENDS