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FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS SAYS MUSIC INSTITUTE HEAD

American business magnate Donald Trump is a great believer in – and a walking example of – doing what you enjoy to create success in life.

It's a message the Director of MAINZ (The Music and Audio Institute of New Zealand), Harry Lyon, is keen to get across to young New Zealanders. "There is growing evidence that suggests people who follow their dreams have greater career satisfaction and show up very favourably in terms of financial success," he says.

Lyon, a well-known Kiwi musician and guitarist for Hello Sailor, has spoken out against recent comment in the press that has criticised students studying something solely because they enjoy it.

"There has been discussion recently amongst commentators about how young people need to do 'the hard stuff' like science and agriculture if they want a meaningful career and to contribute to the New Zealand economy; that they shouldn't be encouraged to study in a discipline simply because they enjoy it. I believe this is seriously misguided."

"It would be sad to think of creative New Zealanders whose successes we celebrate, like Jane Campion, Peter Jackson, Kiri Te Kanawa and the Finn brothers, being deterred from their path as young adults."

"The creative industries are growing faster than more traditional sectors in OECD countries and in New Zealand this sector has grown an average of 8.7 per cent annually since 1997, compared with the national growth of less than 4 per cent."

Lyon completed his Masters dissertation on career development in the music industry and says there is a growing acceptance and vigorous academic discussion worldwide that the arts have an important role to play in the economy.

"If the New Zealand economy is to be competitive it needs to develop sectors outside the traditional reliance on agriculture and in the highly technological, interconnected world of the new millennium, it is likely the arts will lead innovation that impact on other industries. The commentators who call for young people to turn their backs on doing what they enjoy seem to

miss the creative industry discourse expressed by academics like Richard Florida and reflected in the Auckland City Council-commissioned Starkwhite Report.”

Lyon also dismisses comments that cast doubt on the value of full time academic programmes like the Certificate in DJ and Electronic Music Production programme that MAINZ is offering for the first time in 2010.

“This programme, like all those we offer, has been approved by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQ), the tertiary sector’s quality assurance body. Part of gaining this approval involves presenting a curriculum that contains a balance of relevant practical and theory elements developed through appropriate stakeholder consultation.”

“Our programmes align well with the government’s Tertiary Education Strategy, by adding to the number of people gaining qualifications at Level 4 and creating pathways for them to further study. Some of our students have fallen through the cracks at high school and we offer them a second chance at education. By ‘doing what they enjoy’ they learn to learn, develop literacy and numeracy imbedded in our programmes and transferable skills in the use of computers, leadership, communications, work team dynamics and business.”

Lyon also addresses criticism levelled at ‘the inability of all but a handful of music degree graduates to find employment as professional musicians’ and says this could be an indication that they are not adequately prepared for self-employment.

“Most creative industry practitioners are self-employed and musicians more so than the sector average. Creative people typically develop portfolio careers moving from project to project, usually working in small teams across a continuum that ranges from ‘pure art’ at one extreme to that more commercially driven at the other.

“At MAINZ we emphasise the importance of developing self-managing business skills alongside the creative and technical course components to enable this flexibility of career modality for our graduates.”

MAINZ has designed a year-long stand-alone course, the Diploma in Creative Enterprise, to equip people in the creative industries with “a business toolkit”. They call it their “mini MBA” as it uses “blended delivery” methods employing Moodle, an on-line teaching portal, in-house workshops every few weeks and setting students up with mentors. “It means students can use their business idea as a vehicle for course assessment and

“There was nothing like MAINZ when I was younger, absolutely nothing. I think that our programmes and similar ones being delivered by other tertiary providers with ITPQ approval is symptomatic of the creative sector being taken more seriously. New Zealand music is a

\$200 million industry with growing export potential and commentators should do their homework before misleading the public with ill informed opinion.

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About MAINZ

MAINZ is a division of Tai Poutini Polytechnic, attracting approximately 300 students per year to its music and audio programmes. As well as the Certificate in DJ and Electronic Music Production and Diploma in Creative Enterprise, MAINZ offers programmes in Foundation Sound and Music, Audio Engineering and Music Production, Contemporary Music Performance, Live Sound and Event Production, and Music and Event Management.

The school also delivers short courses in song writing, Logic, DJ'ing and Pro Tools, the industry standard audio software used in the majority of recording and post-production facilities internationally. MAINZ prides itself on being New Zealand's first Digidesign Certified Training Locations to deliver the internationally recognised Pro Tools qualifications.

MAINZ has two campuses - one in Auckland City, the other located in Christchurch. Their programmes are supported by Industry and approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority through the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQ).