OUTSIDE IN:
Conversations with GTA Indie Musicians

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PREMISE OF THE PROJECT

- Loosely tied to dissertation
- Based on those living outside of the city
- Experiences of ‘indie’ musicians
- Uncovering barriers and obstacles to lifelong music making
- COVID-19
THE AUTHOR/HOST

- Musician in the ‘indie’ scene in Toronto

- Independent bands and artists

- Teacher/Scholar - invested in improved access to musical opportunities

- Curious about the ways people organize their lives around music
PODCAST?

- Wanted to branch out, explore a new medium
- Differentiate from more traditional format of my dissertation
- Tied to narrative research methodology
- Shift in discourse media in the field of music education
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How have musicians’ lives changed during COVID-19?

- What outlooks and perspectives are held by musicians living in the peripheral GTA regarding Toronto’s indie music scene?

- What do the work-life balances that are required to participate in the (Toronto’s) indie music scene look like?

- Are there any barriers, obstacles, systems, or social structures that are preventing musicians from fully committing themselves to being independent musicians?
EPISODES

0 - Introduction
1 - Ezra
2 - Ciarán
3 - Chrisy
4 - Kyle
5 - Jordan
1 - EZRA

- Bassist
- Humber College
- Grew up/lives in Vaughan
- Glass Cactus
- Teacher
- Side Job:
  - teaching/tuxedo rentals
- Music Theatre
- Mental Health
2 - CIARÁN

- Singer/Songwriter
- Multi-instrumentalist
- Lives in Burlington
- Bands - OG, Big Lonely
- Sources of inspiration
- Videography/Do-It-Yourself
- Commute times
- Side job:
  - serving
3 - CHRISy

- Singer/Songwriter
- Guitarist
- Lives in Hamilton
- Basement Revolver
- Supporting music scenes
- Hamilton/Toronto
- Side job:
  - Graphic design/serving
- Songwriter
- Multi-instrumentalist
- Lives in Kitchener/Waterloo
- Studio in Hamilton
- Bands - MWML, Wayfarer
- Label/band relationships
- **Side Day Job:**
  - Construction electrician
- Family commitments
- Studio in Hamilton
5 - JORDAN

- Drummer
- Business Owner - YC Drums
- Lives in Waterloo
- Leaving Ottawa
- Quitting jobs
- Networking
- Serendipity

- **Side Day Job:**
  - Drum builder/technician @ YC Drums
OVERALL THEMES & IDEAS

- Artistic hubs outside of Toronto
- Proximity to Toronto
- Building self-image as ‘legitimate’ artist
- Working just to play music vs. day job and fitting music around everything else
- COVID-19 related worries
- DIY learning
- Imagining a better future
TAKEAWAYS

1. Independent musicians can’t make a living just from creating original music

2. Regarding proximity to Toronto..
   a. Participants appreciate and sought out proximity to Toronto
   b. They also appreciate their own small artistic bubbles - especially Hamilton

3. COVID-19 introduced a lot of uncertainty for musicians, especially nearing the start of the pandemic.

4. Artists tend to solve problems creatively, leading to DIY learning, workarounds for musical careers, and finding ways to persevere as artists in a social structure that favours economic capital over cultural capital
PROJECT SHORTCOMINGS

- Lack of diversity amongst participants
  - Indie scene is overwhelmingly white, and mostly male

- Audio quality in some of the episodes was not great

- The editing process was extremely time-intensive, which I had not anticipated
- SoC Website
  - Artist info on the website as well
- Sponsored by the School of Cities Fellowship
- Hosted, produced, and edited by Lloyd McArton
- Music by Lloyd McArton
THANK YOU:

Musicians featured in the podcast

School of Cities team & peers

You! for attending this presentation and sitting through me talking :)
