

Media release – 2 September 2013

Royals opening doors for former MAINZ student



It is just a few weeks since Lorde's song Royals topped the Billboard Alternative Songs Chart and co-writer and producer Joel Little is taking calls from record companies around the world.

The former MAINZ student has just flown back from LA and Australia and is due to head to London and New York shortly where he will be working with developing artists.

"You always dream about getting that hit song but you never expect it to happen. It's been a crazy crazy few months. As soon as you have a song that people are excited about lots of doors open and lots of people enquire about collaborations," he says.

In August Royals surged to the top of the Billboard Alternative Songs Chart making 16-year-old Lorde the first woman to top the chart in 17 years. The song is also currently #12 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Aucklander Joel produced and co-wrote Lorde's EP The Love Club, including the song Royals. Lorde, whose real name is Ella Yelich-O'Connor, and Joel began working together after a suggestion from their

respective managers and Joel says she came to him one day with the lyrics to Royals.

“We just made songs we thought were cool and they have connected with people. It is so satisfying to have no expectations and just be proud of your work so I couldn’t ask for a better way for things to roll out. It is kind of the dream come true for it to happen this way,” he says.

Joel studied for a Certificate and Diploma of Contemporary Music Performance at MAINZ in 2002 and 2003 and still keeps a connection with the music school as a member of its Programme Advisory Committee. He was guitarist and singer with Goodnight Nurse and now writes and produces and has his own record label, Dryden Street.

MAINZ Dean Harry Lyon says its no surprise he has done so well. “Joel soaked everything up during his time at MAINZ – the music, the business, he got into everything and in his diploma year he picked up several awards including Top Overall Student,” he says.

“Joel came to MAINZ being the guitarist with a Rock Quest band and left with skills including an understanding of the business, how to use computers to make music, theory, composition and arranging. At MAINZ you get a musical tool kit really,” says Mr Lyon.

Joel says he loved his time at MAINZ and is happy to still contribute. “Back then I just wanted to make music, I didn’t know where I would end up. I appreciate the leg up that MAINZ gave me in terms of having that basic understanding of the business and the industry. It’s a cool place and I’d like to encourage people to get involved with music,” he says.

Many MAINZ students have gone on to have excellent careers in the music industry including Gin Wigmore, Zowie, members of The Naked and Famous, I am Giant, The Checks and Avalanche City. Graduates of MAINZ’s audio engineering and music and event management programmes have worked with some of the biggest international names in the business.

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