**“ROCK AND BLUES”**

**Host: Pauline Vetuna**

**Guests: David Truong, Zach Paden**

**Transcription by Leilani Fuimaono**

*[intro music playing]*

David Truong: Hi, this is David Truong from Ambition Road. And you're tuned to International Disability Day right here on 3CR. Well, I'm actually from Vietnam. Let me backtrack a little bit and say that when I arrived in Australia, I came in the year when the Vietnam war was happening. Actually it was just ending. So that was back in 1975.

So obviously people who are mathematically inclined can work out how old I am. But the reality was that the Australian government brought me over because of a scheme they were sharing with America where they were bringing orphans over from the orphanages throughout South Vietnam.

And I happened to be one of the ones that got randomly chosen to come to Australia. Went through the foster family system, found my way to a school, which specialized in looking after people with vision impairments. And that was in Melbourne. First I went to Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, then I went to St Paul's School for the Blind, got my education there.

And then finally I went to Marcellin College, Bulleen in Melbourne. And from there I left at year 11. And then, yeah, I had a career in sport for ages and I also loved music as well. And I guess that's where my music started. I started playing piano and in those days we had cassettes. So we all used to listen to the radio and listen to our favorite artists and play along and record among cassettes, which is supposedly illegal, but it didn't worry me.

And just sit around the piano that we had there at the boarding school I was staying at and I used to play to the music and trying to copy them. But I had to make a decision though when I got a bit older, round about 19, 20 between pursuing my music, which was only just starting and playing sport. And of course I chose sport because sport at that time was giving me a lot more.

Six years ago, maybe five years ago, I decided to pursue my music because my body told me that I couldn't play sport anymore. My head said I could go on forever, but my body just wouldn't allow that to happen. So I had to have something else to focus on. And so I focused now back on my music.

And to do that I joined up with a organisation called Access Arts, Queensland. And they were running a singing course. So I decided to join the singing course and it was being facilitated by a lady named Annie Peterson, who's quite well known in the music scene here in Brisbane.

For example, she used to do backup singing for Powderfinger on their tours. She used to also be a Programme Director for Woodford for 13 years. So she had a few connections, but she was facilitating, as I mentioned before, the singing course Access Arts and she asked me to write a couple of songs for Access Arts.

Just to give me something to do because I'd never written. Well I'd written some songs but not at that level. And so I did write a couple of songs for exercise and she just absolutely enjoyed them and so did the Access Arts.

So I then gave up singing with the course and went to become the accompanist playing on the piano and helping to write the songs and et cetera. And she encouraged me to record my own album of the songs that I had written from my early childhood and from any future songs that I was going to write from that time on. Like I mentioned, that was probably about five or six years ago.

And so Ambition Road came from that. Recording my album, I had a few musicians that played on the album, which I managed to get myself. And also recommended by Annie, who tutored me through the process of recording the album. She mentored me through that process. And Ambition Road was a vehicle that I was going to use to play my music and obviously perform under, et cetera.

When I was recording my debut album, “Happy Laughter”, one of my things I wanted to do, because Annie encouraged me to network, because she said that was very important if I wanted to fast track myself into the music scene. And so I just went around Fortitude Valley, which is one of the local scenes here. A lot of musicians play around the Fortitude Valley, South Brisbane, New Farm here, et cetera, et cetera.

But anyway, so I went around a few bars. Sounds a bit seedy but I around a few bars and just listened to independent artists doing their thing. And I heard this lady singing and I thought her voice was just so angelic and I just really wanted her on my album.

So I asked a friend of mine to introduce her to me. And so after she'd finished, I had a chat with her, just told her a bit about what I was doing. But I didn't really ask if she wanted to be on the album or not because that would happen later on when I met up again with her at a songwriting event where a few songwriters get together and play their original songs to an audience and the audience give them feedback. And I saw her there. And then she remembered me and we had a good chat and I asked her if she wanted to be in my album. And yeah, she said she would. And we have a guitarist that was on the album, James Pryce-Davies. That was Danielle Brooks by the way, the girl that I found in the bars.

James Pryce-Davies, he was actually one of the members of the Access Arts singing course. And I had a chat to him and I didn't realize that he played guitar for one of the really well known bands in Brisbane called Rumblefish at the time. They're no longer playing that much anymore, but they were back then, maybe five or four years ago.

So that's a couple of musicians I picked up that way and I was just came to me and Guy Webster. He was a recording engineer, but he also played drums and bass. So he helped me with that. And of course I played keyboards, which covered a fair bit as well. And I think that's about all, the others were just singers that I knew from the course. And Annie did a bit of singing as well. Because of course as I mentioned, she'd did backup singing for Powderfinger.

And, oh there was another guy, Peter Vance, he's a life member of Access Arts, but he's a really good jazz singer. So I managed to get him on the album as well. That was my first album. I'm at the moment recording my second album with another guy, another recording engineer called Tony Dean.

My first album basically was just to get my toes in the water. And I guess was also to get the songs that I had written that I had in my head at the time from my childhood, et cetera. And a couple that I'd written on the spot, especially for Access Arts. I just wanted to get them on computer file and also into the streaming sites, et cetera and get them heard. And also have them be able to be performed.

My second album I guess, I think if people listen to the first album, then listen to the second album they'll see I think a development in my music. So these are most of the songs that I've written since probably within the last three years. We started singing them two years ago.

So it does take a fair bit of time because being an independent artist, as the artist people might know, you're at the behest of people's schedules and it doesn't always play ball. So sometimes a recording will take me a while. But yeah, this album is just a collection of the songs that I've written recently.

I think we’ve worked with a different type of sound. I tried to get a bit more of a modern sound. And just explore different subject matter as well in this new album.

*[snippet music plays]*

I'm also a member of the choir and that's been an integral part of my music as well. And this choir is a community choir called Cheep Trill. I'm one of two blind people who are involved in this community choir, which are based over 200 members at the moment.

And both, we have a North side and South side. And basically it's led by a lady named Emma Dean, who's very well known in the music industry as well. She's dancing with *[inaudible]* , et cetera. But she leads this community choir and basically, we do her arrangements of popular mashups.

She likes to get a few popular songs and just mash them up. And we sing her arrangements of them. But what the Cheep Trill choir has allowed me to do is get out of my comfort zone of being a solo singer and I sing bass. Which I should say, doesn't mean you always sing a lead part. You have to harmonize and you have to sing a part that you aren't used to. Which has been really helpful to my development in my own music.

And that's where I also met Tony Dean, her brother who's the Cheep Trill choir accompanist and he's also a recording engineer and he's the one that's been recording my current album with me, which I'm titling “Painted Glasses”. And we've already done five tracks and I'm going to the recording studio, in fact tomorrow to record the next track.

*[musical snippet plays]*

Where you can find my music. I'm on Facebook at www.facebook.com/davidtmusic2014. I think I've got that right. More so on Instagram, I'm on ambitionroad@bandcamp.com. Just for Ambition Road. David R-Truong, T-R-U-O-N-G and you can look that on Google, you'll find me in all the different streaming sites. I'm on Spotify as well. I'm on iTunes. Yeah, I'm everywhere I can be.

ANNOUNCER: You're listening to Power from the Margins on International Day of people with a disability. If you've just tuned in and want to know more about today's special broadcast, go to 3cr.org.au/disabilityday2019.

[song plays]

ZACH: My name Zach Paden from Brotherhood of the Blues. The four main members are Luke Murray, John Cieslak, Harley Bodenham and myself. I am a singer-songwriter.

PAULINE: How did you get together as a band?

Zach Paden: Well, about 2000 and let's say 14, Matt, Luke, John and myself got together and wrote a song called “Love Has Left This Town”. And the story behind that song is Luke, John, Harley and myself got a disability support service here in Lismore, New South Wales called REDinc. And on that day it was Matt, Luke and myself walking around town trying to find kid buskers. And we walked around the block twice and we couldn't find them.

PAULINE: Can you tell me more about that support service? The disability support service?

Zach Paden: REDinc do a lot of different programs here. We do music, arts, cooking. We do a lot of different services here around Lismore.

PAULINE: And how did you decide what kind of music you wanted to do?

Zach Paden: Yeah, that's the story around that is we just sat in the room and we would come out with names for the band. And I said brotherhood and Luke mentioned the blues. So I guess that band name works.

PAULINE: Did you learn music, how to play music together, or is that something you did on your own?

Zach Paden: From my side of things, when I started at REDinc in 2012 I just learnt from Luke, Matt and John. They taught me a lot of different things with music and the song writing aspect of things. And they really helped me with my vocals and singing lessons and all that stuff around that. And really helped me with my vocal range.

Zach Paden: Taya Oxley is one of our backup vocals from the band and our keyboard player and she's also a support worker here at REDinc. And me and Taya wrote songs together. Harley's currently writing some new tracks for Brotherhood and seeing how those work out.

PAULINE: Could you tell us about the music that you have put out already? Because you've put out an EP, yeah?

Zach Paden: We've put out an EP, that was our self-titled EP, “Brotherhood of the Blues”. Our new album is called “Right Back Home”.

PAULINE: And what are some of the gigs that you've had? Because I know you've been a part of some festivals.

Zach Paden: Well the gigs that Brotherhood has been a part of, in 2016 we played at Byron Bay Bluesfest. And we just recently played there a few months ago.

PAULINE: Yeah. Saw that. It sounded really good.

Zach Paden: Yes. Thank you.

PAULINE: Do you have any gigs coming up?

Zach Paden: No, not at this current point in time. We have no gigs planned. But we are definitely working on new material.

PAULINE: Did you talk about what songs you're going to put out? Is it similar to what was the EP? Or are you going for a different sound this time?

Zach Paden: No, Taya and I are going through our list of songs with some of the Brotherhood members. Because all in total members-wise there are than people. When you see us live up on stage, we're a pretty big band. And Taya and I are currently working with some of the members on the new songs. And just seeing which some of the Brotherhood songs will be fits for the band.

PAULINE: If somebody is listening to this and wants to do some music with you or get in touch, how do they do that?

Zach Paden: Well you can contact us through our Facebook page or you can contact Taya. And we're also on Instagram so if you want to contact us through there, you can do that also. And if you want to listen to our music, we're on Apple music, Spotify, Google Play. We're pretty much on those musical platforms. And we do have some of our songs for sale at the moment.

PAULINE: Awesome. Thank you for being on the program Zach.

Zach Paden: Thank you very much.

PAULINE: We're going to go to a track of yours now. What would you like us to play?

Zach Paden: “Love Has Left This Town”. My name is Zach Paden from Brotherhood of the Blues and this is “Love Has Left This Town”.

*[“Love Has Left This Town” by Brother of the Blues plays]*