

WILDE MUSICIANS PODCAST -- EPISODE 9

ZKRY

RECORDED @ ZKRY's House in Capitol Hill Seattle

## **0-10 MINUTES | ZKRY'S MUSIC STORY + PERFORMING STYLE**

ZKRY plays a combination of electronic and instruments played over the top; "future funk" or "electro-soul"; covers many genres of electronic and contemporary styles. ZKRY's dad was the lead guitarist of a hair metal band and that got him started in music. He would play pianos wherever he could; music shops, hotels, bars. Studied piano performance at Montana State University but decided he didn't want to be a concert pianist. Studied business at Seattle Pacific University but decided he didn't want to be a businessman either. He then went to the art institute, got a degree in audio engineering and worked on an album for Spencer Glen (recorded, mixed, played keys etc...) and then decided to work on his own music and he's been playing shows around Seattle venues.

### **MENTIONS**

- ♥ Grizz
- ♥ Black Eagle
- ♥ Recks Bar & Grill in Billings, Montana
- ♥ Montana State University
- ♥ Seattle Pacific University
- ♥ Art Institute in Seattle
- ♥ Spencer Glen
- ♥ Kelude Band
- ♥ Cannabadroids
- ♥ TACOMA VENUE: Sam's Bar & Grill
- ♥ SEATTLE VENUES: El Corazon, Low Fi, Tim's Tavern, Funhouse, High Dive
- ♥ Drea Marilyn
- ♥ APC40 | ABLETON LIVE
- ♥ Talk Box
- ♥ Daftpunk

ZKRY wants to make sure people are dancing during his shows. He won't play songs that aren't dancy enough. He wants people to dance because "it's a lot of fun and you can get people to move with something that I've created. It shows that they like it. I want to be active and I don't want people mashing. I want to visually see that they're pleased in it." - ZKRY

"I want the audience to hear something they've never heard before but I want them to feel the bass too and feel that punch in their chest. I think that's pretty important. I want to feel it." - ZKRY

"(Performing music) is kinda like in skate boarding you don't pay attention to where you're at, you pay attention to where you're going...you stay one step ahead." - ZKRY

## **10-20 MINUTES | TO MAKE MUSIC OR TO BOOK SHOWS**

ZKRY tells the story of when he got to sign his first autograph and he was pretty stoked by this first milestone.

People recognize his logo but not usually his face. He has lots of stickers around town. He's thinking of handing out stencils for spray painting instead of stickers.

"A lot more (time) is spend on the music. If I just focus on making sure that the music is as good as it can be, that the quality is premier, and that it sounds professional and releasable, people will just appreciate it and naturally book you themselves. You'll attract people who want talent and as long as you're focusing on that talent instead of on stressing out about the booking, it might work out. In my experience, I just focus on the music and people see that I'm working hard at that and trying to make as good of music as I can instead of being the coolest dude around....Focus on the music. Focus on the art because that's what it's really about. It's not about being the badest dude in town, it's about making sure your music is up to your standards and I have a pretty high standard." - ZKRY

Sometimes artist and venues will contact ZKRY and ask him to perform to fill a bill. Sometimes he reaches out to ask artists if he can join them. Instead of trying to book shows, he's busy focusing on creating and releasing new music. He has a lot of content to push out, a full album that he's been performing. The hardest part is selling tickets. There's a lot of pressure and guilt amongst musicians who feel like they should be doing more; either more music or more business.

ZKRY prefers keeping a lot of distance between shows so he can build hype and get more people to show up.

When releasing music, think about your audience. Would your fans rather get a new song on a holiday as a gift from you or are they busy and would rather get a new song delivered a few days after the busy holidays? Your call.

Tell your fans to share your songs! Actually write it out and speak it. Ask them to share with friends and family or they might not think to do it on their own.

## **20-30 MINUTES | 'NOTHING SPECIAL' MUSIC VIDEO**

ZKRY shares his ideas for music videos; live looping in Ableton, skating boarding, and a very elaborate 10min description of his upcoming music video "Nothing Special" -- *if you don't like details, skip this section.*

### **MENTIONS**

- ♥ Yesler Way, Seattle
- ♥ Rocket Power, Nickelodeon

## **30-40 MINUTES | FOCUS ON CREATING HIGH QUALITY MUSIC**

ZKRY shares his tips for getting started making your own music videos. He says, "just do it but prioritize good quality." Get good equipment, get camera savvy people involved, include interesting geometry or visual features, plan out a script and bring your notebook to meetings so you can communicate your concept clearly.

ZKRY does most of the creation work himself because he wants to control the quality and "when you want something done really good, people are only going to go so far." - ZKRY

"Nobody cares about your project as much as you do." - Cha Wilde

ZKRY starts making music at the piano. He challenges himself to make more interesting chord progressions but he stays away from traditional song structure.

"I'm not trying to do something a certain way or have a certain style or a certain look. I'm just trying to make good music and explore different genres and try to learn as much as I can along the way and release stuff that sounds good to me. I get pickier over time about what sounds good and what doesn't." - ZKRY

"We can do anything. We can literally record anything. What do you do with that. What do you do with anything?" -- ZKRY (36:36)

ZKRY's music is all exploration and based on improvisation. He makes his own samples. He recorded an entire sample pack in a studio with sounds of him and his friends breaking stuff; wood on metal, laughter, hitting buckets. He also made a midi instrument by recording every note of a marimba. You can download these raw samples for free from his website.

### **MENTIONS**

- ♥ Tiny Desk Top
- ♥ Break Stuff Samples
- ♥ Hans Zimmer Masterclass

## **40-50 MINUTES | RECORDING SAMPLES & LIVE LOOPING**

How many octaves is a violin? We awe-out for a moment over how complicated it would be to sample musicians to create a full midi instrument and wonder how Hans Zimmer does this for his filmscore orchestras. (*Chim in here if you have answers for us*).

ZKRY gives advice for musicians who want to start recording their own samples; get good quality microphone, isolated space.

ZKRY looks online for samples he uses, refers to his past library of samples recorded for previous albums, and he will record new samples if he can't find the sound he is looking for.

ZKRY is wanting to release music more consistently and start submitting music to labels. When approaching a new goal or moving in a new direction he will use Google Magic, contemplate possible approaches, re-read his rough draft 12 times and then just do it.

In addition to music, ZKRY enjoys painting and vegetarian cooking.

We brainstorm how ZKRY can create and share content regularly; recording live looping, improvising, releasing weekly songs, share tiny songs that just give your fans a taste of what you're working on.

*We watch ZKRY's live looping video on Youtube -- song runs for a few minutes until (52:25)*

## **50-60 MINUTES | NEW MUSIC INSPIRATION**

ZKRY tries to do a lot of sound design and make new sounds that nobody has ever heard. He plays music everyday and he's constantly trying to find new music to listen to and study. He listens to approx. 10 new songs a week; always looking for new stuff. When he hears new songs, he'll either want to dance to it or jam along to it. Jamming along to a song helps you to be more open and versatile; to find chord progressions and solo over anything. He used to go jam with other people and now people usually come to jam with him and his music.

When you're playing shows you make new musician friends at every show. You can also make musician friends through Facebook groups; like the ones hosted by Abelton and Audio Engineering Society meetings. These groups and conferences are also a great place to learn.

- ♥ Octamalian -- Chris Jordan & Emily McVicker
- ♥ ZKRY on Spotify
- ♥ Ableton
- ♥ Audio Engineering Society
- ♥ NAMN: The National Association of Music Merchants <https://www.namm.org/>

## **60-70 MINUTES | FORWARD THINKING MUSIC TECHNOLOGY**

### **ADVICE FOR YOUR PAST SELF**

"Get started earlier on Ableton. Do it more. Start learning guitar now."

Ableton's audio engine is awesome and no other DAW will allow you to perform and produce, there's way more online tutorials and the support network is very cool and everyone wants to help each other and the user interface is very easy to play with, you can do the same thing 5 different ways so you can accomplish what you want to do in different ways. It's all I need for both creation and performance.

### **ASK OTHER MUSICIANS**

"The technology, new progressions they've done, things that are kind of new technology, new ways to do something, new ways to write music that are not traditional, trying to do things a little bit more, how are you experimenting, how are you pushing boundaries and moving forward?"

### **PANEL QUESTION**

Cha explains what she gets out of her performances at yoga studios and how she gets a different experience out of different places.

ZKRY wonders why more females aren't working with the technology. Females seem to lean towards acoustic. If you can do both acoustic and electronic music then you're more versatile. If you can do both, then it's the best of both worlds, it's kick ass! ZKRY advises Cha how she can blend folk acoustic with electronic. He advises getting good kick drums, using a spectrum on the master channel to make sure nothing is peaking too much when you perform on club speakers, and make sure things sound wide.

"Really, if you're doing performance, all you gotta do is add kick, snare, the bass and you take over the rest and it would be kick ass. People would be really into it. If you can do it with just you and a guitar then adding a couple of elements will bring it way to life." -- ZKRY

- ♥ Katie Kuffel
- ♥ Drea Marilyn
- ♥ Masego
- ♥ Push 2