

## HYMAProject Report

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**From:** "HYMAProject Report" <thirdear@iafrica.com>  
**To:** "jenmay" <jenmay@mweb.co.za>  
**Sent:** 10 February 2003 10:17  
**Subject:** Colleen Trollip - Re: Demo Info - 3rd Ear Music advice (MMINO / NAC)

Dear Colleen

Most of the advice that we can offer you is already on the website. You asked for my advice, and I will gladly give it - not only in terms of my brief with the MMINO and the NAC (who help fund my archive; we are expected to advise young musicians) - but as a musician myself, who comes from many places in SAfrica; I also went to a small town school - Witbank - and I have been in music for 43 years. .

Don't take short cuts; go out there and play, believe in yourself (and not the demos or the studio recordings) and you'll be surprised how quickly a music career can fall into place. It's not easy; it's a wonderful lifetime challenge.

My views on music and musicians are a little alternative to that of the commercial record industry - who we believe is in the process, together with the SABC, of destroying our music, not developing it. They are doing so because it's easy and cheap to import overseas trends and recorded product (Pop Idols, Big Brother etc). To them making music and producing a recording (or a demo) are one and the same thing. That's why South African musicians - who do so well when they leave to record and work in the USA and UK - cannot even pay their rent on South Africa.

An estimated 500 000 people in this country make music. Less than 250 (that's 0.01%) produce records.

3rd Ear Music is a music company - although we have produced hundreds of records - we have introduced many more musicians to the world and we know that demos are not the way to go; not unless you are playing or performing music, regularly.

If you insist on making demos as a recording artist - then you have to have a lot of spare money; to market yourself - not unlike Pop Idols and those other ridiculous record & broadcast industry events. If you are not rich, then there is no point in wasting your money or anyone else's.

Play and perform the music first, then get a feel and develop your own style confidence and / or what it is people who like your music want to listen too; then you record. But before the studio step there are many more steps to take via community halls, street corners, coffee bars, shebeens, clubs and concerts.

Making a demo first is like a great young tennis player recording a video in action and then sending it to the tennis federation and asking them to let you in on the professional circuit. It doesn't work like that. Musicians have to play live to survive or find another profession. And any record company or agent who accepts you, as a musician, on the strength of a demo recording, must be watched with caution. If they can use you, in the short term to sell units and make them a quick buck, they'll do that. What happens to you and your passion after that means nothing to them. You'll end up like many of those poor Pop Idols do. Down and out!

SAfrican music does not sell on records overseas, not because our musicians aren't good, but because people in most countries want to hear music or dance to it - not just look at it!

That's why so many hundreds of South African working musicians dominate the USA and UK music scene - because they go there to perform and play - and they usually succeed. In the meantime the South African record industry spends millions on trying to make those 250 musicians look and sound good on record, but nobody overseas wants to look or listen to recordings only.

For many years now, Dave Mathews remains one of the biggest grossing live music shows in the USA - bigger than Michael Jackson - but no record company in South Africa would listen to his demos. There are countless similar cases from Abdullah Ibrahim to Manfred Mann; they all went from street

10/02/03



corners in South Africa to the big concerts of the world.

The most successful Rock and Pop record musician / producer of all time - in the history of contemporary music - comes from Belfast High School. Mutt (Robert John Lange) is now married to Shania Twain. Couldn't pay his rent in Johannesburg.

So coming from Nelspruit isn't a handicap. If you form a band - as Mutt did or as I did in Witbank - you can grow from there. But what makes me sad is that SAfrica's young bands want to make demos and videos and get work? Imagine the Springboks making a video of their practises and then demanding that the International Rugby Board include them in the world cup. Stupid? Not at all. If musicians don't go out there and face the crowds and other players - by starting in the back yard, the street or the local halls and pubs - they will never be recognised. That's what's so exciting (and tough) about being a musician. You make your own venues if you have to. (I started over 15 clubs and coffee bars between 1968 and 1988).

Music is about developing a discipline - the more you practice the luckier you get. However, the down side of what looks so easy and glamorous is that lazy musicians will resort to drugs in order to speed up the process and to help them cope. So they imagine. Exactly the opposite is true.

Sportspeople who are fit and confident don't have to take drugs; the same with performers / musicians. There's no need for a creative person to think and drive on drink or drugs if they are mentally prepared, spiritually able and physically fit. That's how you build confidence. Then you can play a concert every night and love it. The applause and the excitement of playing does far more wonderful things for a musician than drugs can do; infact for some people, like me, music is the drug. And I'm an addict; so right there one has to be disciplined and careful about how much you can take. Don't over indulge (overdose).

Drugs are for lazy musicians (and sportspeople too - that's why some resort to steroids.) Point is, you can cope if you get yourself prepared through practise and maintain a discipline.

Making a demo can sometimes be a short cut to the top - but if you happen to get there without training - you can just as easily loose your confidence and self esteem as a sportsperson can break a bone.

You don't have to become rich and famous to be a musician. I have been playing since my Witbank days (1960) and I've made a reasonable living; I've been married to the same musician / actress lady for 32 years and brought up 4 children and a grandchild; who are all great musicians. There are hundreds and thousands of us.

Every now and then I did get lucky - through practise - and had a few good songs or found a good few musicians (see the website); but my focus has always been on the project or the concert at hand...never that illusive record industry pot of gold.

Music is a good and an ageless life and if you do it right you will live - like so many musicians do - to a ripe old age. Fashions and trends - promoted for the short term by the commercial record & broadcast industries come and go - but a good musician will last and live forever. (Our old friend - RIP - Stephane Grappelli, who had his first hit in 1932 in France, played his last gig in Australia in wheel chair at 86 years old....and loved it. People will still be living with him and his music in a 1000 years time.) My mother in law - one of the best and most respected piano teachers in the country, and her Piano lady friends - who are all in their late 70's early to mid 80's - are still jorling, playing music and having a laugh. It keeps them hip and young! Think about it.

That's our story. Break a leg.

Regards  
David Marks

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----- Original Message -----

**From:** jenmay

**To:** [thirdear@iafrica.com](mailto:thirdear@iafrica.com)

**Sent:** Monday, January 06, 2003 12:39 PM

**Subject:** Demo Info-3rd Ear Music

To whom it may concern

My name is Colleen Trollip (17) and I am incredibly interested in a career in the music industry. I have been playing piano since I was 5 years old, and had some formal voice training for about 5 months last year....sorry, 2001. The only thing, coming from Nelspruit, there is not much opportunity to get anything going, and I wouldn't know how anyway. The reason I am writing is to find out how one goes about getting involved in the industry. I love music, it is my life. I love playing and I love singing. I have tried my hand at song writing, having written one song and composed music for it (but, honestly, it doesn't come as naturally as it should..the lyrics, not the music).

If you could offer me any advice, as to what I need to do to get a demo into your company (or any other advice as to what I could do), it would be greatly appreciated.

Kindest regards

Colleen Trollip

Colleen Trollip

17 years old (31 March 1985)

Matriculated 2001 - Penryn College (IEB Private School)

Nelspruit