



# The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

## Ep46: 9 Music-Preneur Lessons For 2019

You're listening to Episode 46 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 46 – 9 Music-Preneur Lessons For 2019](#).

I'm your host, Suz – a mindset coach helping DIY musicians and creatives see themselves as music-preneurs in order to create a sustainable career in music.

To ring in the new year I wanted to take a brief look back at some of the music-preneurs I've had the honor of interviewing on this podcast. Each month I've sat down with a band or solo musician to discuss with them their experience so far in building a sustainable career in music.

We've discussed everything from income streams to daily routines to certain mindsets that have carried them through the ups and downs of this business.

I want to take you through the last 9 interviews that I've done so far, highlighting what I feel are the most important takeaways and lessons learned of each. I can share with you my expertise on certain subjects, but when it comes to knowing *exactly* what it's like to walk in the shoes you're hoping to one day fill, it's best to heed to words of those who have already worn them and worn them well.

First up, our theme music songbirds, you hear them introduce me each week with their infectious pop melodies – Sub-Radio. These guys have been playing together for over 10 years and in [Episode 13](#), I asked them how they've come to build this band into a sustainable business. Here's what they had to say...

**Matt:** I think for a long time we've had to look at it from both sides, the business side and music side. I know I'm definitely like the first person to be thinking about what our next step is. I mean I do a lot of songwriting too, we all do. Yeah, definitely a balance. I don't know what your guys take on that is...

**Michael P:** Yeah, the business side is frankly something we didn't consider as a unit for a long time I think. We were making merchandise without any sort of end goal as to what our profit was going to be and what our margin is going to be. And we were kind of writing and recording songs without a ton of direction for years, and so now we're, after going through all of that and discovering what a pitfall that is, we have learned from that, and we're really trying to run the band as a sustainable small business with a sizeable income that is large enough to support all the endeavors of the business and beyond.

So, like as it stands today we all have day jobs, but our day jobs fund us as human beings. Money from our day jobs does go a little bit into funding the band, but for the most part, the band is self-sustaining and is growing in capital which is really cool.

**Suz:** That's awesome.

**Michael P:** It's taken a long time and it's a lot of work and we're still learning.

**Matt:** It's scaled up since day one. The amount we earn has gone up, so we've been able to spend more on the business too. So, we've been able to pay for things like I mentioned before PR and new merch, and new CDs and all that stuff is coming out with the singles, and it's all coordinated now. We actually have meetings to talk about it, so it has been good.

**Adam:** I think we were fortunate that we kind of backed into a good structure where, you know, we've got Matt who has sort of over time taken on the role of Sub-Radio business manager. And then it's sort of like we've all slotted into our separate support roles for what we handle that's not music. We didn't really have a focused discussion about that until very recently there is always stuff that we were all doing. So, I don't know if it's a good model for other people or not, but it was something that we sort of discovered as it went, and it happened to work for us.

What I loved about that interview was that for a band with 6 members, they've really worked out a way to delegate roles and each member holds their own when it comes to building this shared vision. Thanks guys for sitting down with me for my first interview!

Up next, Zach Golden, 1/2 of Broken Luxury, talked with me in [Episode 17](#) about their experience growing a brand that is focused more on their message and less on

the vanity metrics. Rather than going for the quick wins he talks openly about their vision for longevity and the impact they want to have and what it means to him to be a DIY musician. Take a listen...

**Zach Golden:** I think a lot of the things that we were thinking of how we wanted everything to be brought forward as Broken Luxury, I think a lot of it is intrinsic. For stuff like, you know, even like social media most of time we run past ideas or at least when we were first starting to post everything or started to find more of what we wanted Broken Luxury to be, especially with how this album is, you started to dive into okay, what type of pictures should this be?

We absolutely want them to be artistically done. We don't want them to be as if we are taking this as a joke. We want to make sure that's it's represented in a way that shows what the music will be when you listen to it, which is consistently a learning process. But switching to kind of black and white, making minimal statements in our pictures and like those statements are not really focusing on hashtags, although I understand the importance of that hashtags because it to get you out to more places.

It's just we believe in the integrity of the organic nature of it. An organic build that was just people who are seeking something, and they didn't know what it was until they've heard it. And that takes a very long time and that is not an easy road.

Someone I consistently look up to in that regard is Anderson Paak and the Free Nationals. They've been playing together for over a decade, working it just like any other person who understands the feeling what it's like to feel like a local band for a very, very long time. You never know when a break is going to come or if it will, but that's not why you end up doing it.

If you're searching for that it won't come and when it does it will be a flash in the pan. Because you need to find the happiness in the moments of the building, building everything around that to get to that moment or hopefully get to that moment. And so, those type of artists are the ones that I think both Josh and I look up to because we're not massive on selling ourselves.

I know that most artists are not like that because they believe in the artistry of the music, but I guess we're selling ourselves on not being big on selling ourselves and that's the big point.

I mean, I feel great about doing things D. I. Y. Like, you know, I'm happy that we aren't signed, I'm happy that we own our own publishing. Which definitely make sure you have your own publishing company, because that's just money left on the table otherwise. When you do that D.I.Y. deal and you're doing everything then you understand how everything gets done.

So then once your team starts to grow, which whether it be you can hire somebody because you can finally afford it or it's just, you know, people that find you. Or friends who are just like, you know, "I just want to be a part of this, I want to help, you make this happen." Then you're able to, like, delegate and in a legitimate way instead of being like, "Uhh...I don't know."

Because they're looking to you. Anybody who works with us as well are looking to Josh and I to have the vision of how we want Broken Luxury to move forward.

I love how he and his partner Josh take ownership of their vision and understand that at the end of the day they are the decision makers, which isn't always an easy role but a vital one. Thanks for sharing with us, Zach.

My third spotlight was such a thrill for me – Cipha Sounds – someone I've spent years listening to on the radio and have had the distinct pleasure to work with, agreed to sit down with me and shed light on what it's been like for him to carve a completely new path in this industry and be successful at it.

He is someone who creates his own opportunities and never loses sight of the fact that while it is his path, no one gets there alone. He's got such a positive and healthy mindset around this business and I have no doubts everything he sets out to do will be accomplished because of that mindset and his incredible talents.

Let's listen back to [Episode 20](#) and what he had to share with us about sustainability in this industry...

**Cipha Sounds:** I never treat myself like the talent. So, I think that helps a lot because I do like to be in the spotlight when it comes to, like, before back in the day there was a lot of DJ-ing, now there's a lot DJ-ing and comedy. But I do it because I love it not because I want to get famous from it.

So, I don't know, not that I feel like a fraud, but I definitely don't feel like...

I never like being treated like the talent. I like being treated like a businessman who also has this skill. You know what I'm saying?

So that helps a lot. That automatically cuts out my ego and cuts out the way people have to treat a celebrity or star. And I do it to the extreme because I never want to be looked at as, like this kind of like celebrity. But I think some people don't do it at all, and I think they have to, like know that their name and their reach as an artist is, not like a façade but like your storefront.

And you want to keep your storefront clean and washed, but the numbers are in the back. You know what I'm saying? So, I think people only pay attention to the front. I never understand artists who bitch about doing promo tours. You know they're like we not getting paid for this, you got to go to that, that, that. Yeah, that's how you meet the people so that in two years from now it goes smoothly, ya know?

So, I think they need to put some of that business sense into their daily activities. Now, if you have business people that do all that for you, fine but make sure you're listening to them. You know what I'm saying? Instead of always fighting your manager or your publicist or your agent on what you should be doing like I'm not saying do everything they do like a slave, but like, know that there's a business to what you're doing.

And here's what he had to say about building his team...

**Cipha:** Well I'll say first and foremost is like vibe, energy instantly. If don't want to hang out with you I really can't work with you, because our job, a lot of our job is hanging out.

Where back in the day, I was forced to have to work with people I didn't like, and now that's very rare. Unless it's like a big gig or somebody else is there. But also like I don't, I like, I love doing improv comedy, and I love doing stand-up. I like improv a little bit more only because it's a team sport as opposed to stand-up which is a solo sport.

So, I kinda like the team thing because I don't know, I just I don't like saying I, I like saying We. So, everything with me is team, and it's our show, we are gonna win, and you know improv is all about that. And I like helping other people shine.

I can't expect everyone to be me, but I just need people to be on time. If you say, you're going to do something do it and be reliable, dependable. Now, what that means is if you can't show up let me know you can't show up and just not just not show up. Yeah, so stuff like that is just like communication, you know, we have a big thing with loyalty and trust that is, that takes time to see, and you can see who's still around and who's not around. I have a problem with this because I want everyone to be how I am and everyone's not how I am. Like somewhat close to my standards of punctual and communication.

I love that so much – communication is key. At the end of the day the music industry is a business like any other and those who can show up and do the work are the one who will outlast those who think it's one big party.

Thank you Ciph for that insight and many congrats on all of the new successful projects you've created over the past year.

In [Episode 24](#) I spoke to Lesley Barth, a singer-songwriter who had literally just quit her day job when we sat down to discuss her next chapter.

She shared openly about her recent transition and the structure she needed to create to keep going, check it out...

**Lesley Barth:** I do think it was intentional, and I'm very thankful that my boss and the company was really on board with that. You know people who are good at their jobs have more control in the situation then they feel the moment. But every few months had to check in with my boss and be like, "Okay, how's this working for you? How's this working for me?"

For me it happened like in a day basically. And I'd obviously been thinking about this for a few years, but like another annoying response to that is like, "I just knew."

**Suz:** I know but, it's true you have to trust your gut.

**Lesley:** Yeah, I just knew, and I think the reason I knew was because I realized I felt that I was no longer getting out of it more than I was putting in. I feel like I'm just at pivot point and I want to, like, put all my weight behind it.

You know, cause when you're burning the candle at both ends and when you're in a day job that's maybe not your dream, and you've got this other thing on the side, it's

easy to feel like, "Oh screw you guys this doesn't work for me. I don't want to be just a cog in your machine!" Like I don't know it's easy to get in that mindset, but like they've been good to me, you know I was able to take this leap because of this company.

And what it really does come down to is it has nothing to do with the job, has nothing to do with the company, it has to do with what I want, and so, I made it about me. And they got to pay the role 50% and get out of it like 95% of what they were getting. So, kind of a win-win.

**Suz:** Right, exactly. You showed them the opportunity, and I think that's really important. You had mentioned wanting to find a routine and having a little bit more structure around your day now that you're full time. You know when you said that you just felt it and you knew that you wanted to leave your day job, do you feel like certain practices like yoga, or even meditation, do you feel like you're in tune with listening to your body?

**Lesley:** Yeah, I think that's the biggest thing that I get out of it is just being a little bit more present and a little bit more mindful and getting out of my head a little. I did yoga in college and everything and I think for me then it was just like a work out, I did not get that other side of things. And then when I had an injury two years ago, I kinda eased back into stuff with yoga.

Especially after not being able to kind of run or swim for a while, just getting, like, feeling present in my body and managing some of the stress I was going through, I was like, "Oh my God I need to do this every day." Yeah, so that will definitely be a huge part of my routine.

Such an inspiring episode about transitions and how she and her husband, who is also a full-time musician learn from and support one another. Thanks, Lesley for those lessons!

Up next, in [Episode 28](#) I interviewed James Divine, and professional musician and music teacher. He shed some light on what it was like to realize you should never play for free, and what that really means...

**James Divine:** And that's something I didn't learn until about 8 years ago. I actually went to a speaking workshop and the presenter said, "Never speak for free even when you do." And that was confusing at first as like, "Well what do you mean? You said never speak for free even when you do," and he said, "Always have a purpose in what you're doing."

So if you're going somewhere and you're playing for free and it's because you want to, maybe you really love the organization and this is just your way to contribute, everybody is giving their product for free, or the accountant is donating their time the lawyer's donating their time and this is you just your donation, but you've chosen to do this, then that's one thing.

You see a lot of ads for people wanting musicians and they'll say you know you'll get exposure that's always the the word I hear and I hate that word because I have rarely seen something come of that where supposedly you're going to get a lot of exposure.

So that's one thing with the playing for free, make it mindful, don't just do it because someone asked you or because you think you're not going to get any other gig.

The other thing that I learned is that when you play for something beneath your pay level, your pay grade so to speak, then you're stealing that from somebody else. This was a really big insight for me, so for example, a lot of these coffee house things... I was earning like \$20, \$10, I think even \$5 one time, despite telling people, you know there was a good audience there, and despite telling people this is the only income the musician's making.

What I figured out is those gigs are good for someone who's in high school or someone who's a young college student because when I was that age and I earned \$5 or \$10 I felt really good and even if I gave up a Friday night, even if I was on at 2am and they gave me ten minutes but they pay me \$10 I felt really good and really valued and that was sometime... you know, that at one point it was the first time I got paid for playing, I was 16 or 17, so those those gigs are important for some people.

But at the point I was earning those \$10, \$15, \$20 and I had already been in the Army band for 10 years, I was a professional musician and I was stealing those gigs from people who needed them like the college students and the high school students.

Thanks, James, for that insight. It so important to be able to be honest with yourself about the value of your time and talents and to be brave enough to not say yes to something that you feel isn't a fair trade for either one.

When I sat down with Cheryl B. Engelhardt in [Episode 32](#), we discussed the importance of building out various income streams and how, as a musician, certain streams are born out of necessity and sometimes they are built the long and hard way – trial and error.

Take a listen to how she began diversifying her income...

**Cheryl:** I feel like for a very long while I felt kind of lost and I was just thinking about performing. Luckily, I had gotten a street performing gig in Boston and I would make a couple hundred dollars in a few hours, it was really awesome, like busking. I had a couple things that I knew if I showed up I'd be able to turn that into income. I started looking at like what were those and how can I get more of them.

House concerts became one of those things and then I started to think, "Oh, maybe I want to do freelance composing, maybe I wanna set up my own system and start doing that." And it kind of happened organically where I just got in touch with my editor friends, people that were editing the commercials and I'd give them my CD's and say, "Hey if you need any temp music to you know put on a track on a cut that you're working on hopefully maybe it will stick," and that is exactly what happened.

I started to get some licenses, I started talking to some other people about licenses, and I was like, "Oh, licensing is a thing that my music is good for, cool." Like TV shows and commercials and commercials that I'm not scoring but actually just giving my songs from my records to.

So it started to make sense a few years in, but it took awhile and I wasn't focused on like, "I need to now diversify my income portfolio," like I you and I, if someone was talking about as a thing I would have been like, "That sounds like a good idea I like it, let's get some action!" I was very much like throwing spaghetti at the wall like let's see what sticks and a lot of it was not sticking and it was just a big waste of spaghetti.

I mean that's one of the reasons honestly that I do talk at conferences and I've put together some courses and I do some one on one coaching with musicians because

there are a lot of really clear action to take if you know what you want, and it can take years to actually get to that and know what all the options are, or at least some of the options, that are in line with what you want and what your brand is and I think I started to see my biggest shift when I first got a career coach. I was like, "What?! I could be doing this in way less time?" I just feel like, "Oh my god, why is this not in music programs at schools? Why aren't music industry people talking about this, why are record labels not talking about their programs?"

It was sort of like mind boggling that it was like this hidden thing that you have to figure out on your own and it could take decades I was like, "Yeah, no, I'm not..." after two years I was like, "Okay now what?"

I love her candidness and her ability to see the need to take action to either build something new or pivot when necessary. Thanks for those lessons, Cheryl!

In [Episode 36](#) I did something different and sat down with 2 different artists who had formed an accountability pact, thanks in part to Cheryl, as you'll hear.

Corina Corina and Lauren Kelly Benson, artists with 2 different sounds and in 2 different places in their career, explain how they hold each other accountable and what that's meant to each of their journeys...

**Corina Corina:** Lauren and I... we met through Willie Green. We were both artists who have done a lot of work with him and I sort of knew of her and met her at a few various events.

We both have a few exes who run in similar circles, went through some pretty hard times when it came to that, so that was like the first thing we related on. We're both yoga teachers and practitioners.

I left New York for a couple years, but before I left I think we're pretty cool and it was always kind of like this joke about like damn we have a lot in common like s\*\*t and then I left for a couple years and came back and she's been the greatest gift I've had since I came back. This accountability thing has just been like, I've been in a 12-step program for a long time and I liken it to sponsorship. It really really has been transformative for me.

**Suz:** I know that a mutual friend of all ours and a former guest of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast kind of spurred this on for you, so tell us about that.

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**Lauren Kelly Benson:** Yeah so at the Music-Preneur [Mindset Summit] conference I met Cheryl [B. Engelhardt] and I was like in the middle of the writing process and knew that I was arriving at a place to like dive into music as a career and so I did a group with her. The work with her was say over 6 weeks and meeting weekly and all these tools and all this information and then at the end she was like, "Now continue this work and find someone who can hold you accountable and who you can hold accountable and someone who has similar goals and who you can trust."

And I immediately thought of Corina. So we use Cheryl's template for accountability which is three areas of our life and the top three priorities of the week in that area of our life and so Corina and I basically chose the things that we have in common as the three areas. So we do our 2nd Chakra which is hippie grown up stuff yeah so that's the seed for the hippies out there, that's the seed of creativity and also abundance as far as money and also sexual, dating life stuff.

So that encompasses a lot for us and me and Corina are close enough that we can share in that area of our life. What else? Health, which we both do physical and mental health when it comes to that area of our life, and then our music career. So every week we have 9 things – 3 in each category that we tackle in those 3 areas of my life and it's been really super helpful to me.

Sometimes I pinch myself that I found someone like Corina who is very... when Corina writes it down it gets done, which holds me accountable in a way of really watching her get through her list. I think I've come to the table a little bit more sometimes like, "I didn't do that one." But I'll write it down again this week. But yeah it's been a really grounding process we meet once a week and yeah.

I loved this episode and I know many listeners were inspired by their journeys as artists and the beauty of their friendship. Thanks ladies for that great talk!

As my first interview in Season 2, I sat with Tommy Darker in [Episode 40](#) to discuss the Music-Preneur movement that he has had a large role in and what it is that inspires him as a musician to share what he's learned with others, rather than keep it all for himself.

Take a listen to what he had to say...

**Tommy Darker:** So, I guess the short answer is because I care. Because I want to make sure that some other people could learn from what I failed at or what I learned that worked so I guess it's that. I wanted to share things because, why keep it for yourself? Why not make this world a better place by getting more people to do things that work for them and maybe they can have a better life? So that was the the initial reason.

I'm always thinking about my mission in this world and know what I'm doing and I'm the most privileged person, all right? I'm a white man in the western world like, oh my gosh what a privilege!

So when I'm thinking about this, and I'm telling my brother as well who is now an entrepreneur too, like we've we've got a responsibility for everything we have, we're not from a rich family but we never starved, we never had anything against us, but oh my gosh what a privilege this is!

And we should do whatever it takes to actually make this world a better place, leave some legacy. I want to make sure that this world is better for our children, for everybody else, and then that's why you will see that in everything that I'm doing, I'm always trying to be a little bit more open, share a little bit more, and be more charitable.

It's – I care. I think it would be unfair if we kept everything for ourselves, so all these goodies the things you're learning, the things the people you come across... like why not share it?

Connect people. Why not make the world a better place? So it's not a thing that's a fetish of mine – I wanna be huge and then my name will be all over and you know become the next... but no it's just human beings around the world suffering, so if I can do one thing well – which is music and teaching – I want to make a difference with that. Not just be good at it and then have a salary and then have a family and then that's it.

So I've sacrificed a lot of things to reach that level where I would not think of like this is my project this is about me. No, I mean now it's about the world, so whatever I'm doing I'm just trying to think of the impact that this will have in the whole world and if this makes sense or if it's a, you know, just like stroking my ego or something.

I wanna make sure it's it's about others. And if I end up having some global influence I wanna make sure I put good use of that influence, because this way there's no you know assholes being out of that and known by millions of people and saying things that don't make sense. You know what I'm talking about right? We've seen people like this right?

Yes... we all know a few too many of those people but thanks to people like Tommy we know a few less!

Last, but certainly not least, we've come to my latest spotlight, my sit down with advocate and artist Cassandra Kubinski. In [Episode 44](#) we discussed her many passions and projects she's built throughout her career and how she breaks boundaries as a music-preneur independent from a label.

Most recently she went on a world tour and she shared some insights with us about it...

**Cassandra Kubinski:** I took one simple directive and my directive was, "I will go where I have friends who have wanted me to visit them." That's pretty much it!

Like I have friends who have left the U. S. or whom I met in the U. S. who don't live here who have said for many years, "Come to Thailand! I can totally help you get shows! Come to Australia. I'll totally be able to help you set up some shows!" So the trajectory went from the Global Music Conference, Midem, in Cannes, France.

I started there in June and then I flew to Romania where my husband is from and was in the capital city of Bucharest and played a benefit for autism there where we raise enough money to send ten children through ten hours of therapy so that was really exciting and then we flew to Thailand and I yeah a handful of shows, I think three shows, at various restaurants and hotel rooftop bars, that made me a little bit of money.

I mean we're not talking like tour-supporting-money, but this was like, this tour particularly was not really about me money it was about like doing it to do it. So Thailand, then we went to Malaysia and I played a show there – a smaller show like an open mike feature – and then we flew to Australia and I did two shows there – one house concert and one show in a more proper cabaret venue.

So yeah! I mean all in all it was it was 30 insane days, you know or possibly even like 29, but we were away for just about a month and it was ... I mean I look back on and I'm like we are first of all crazy, like I don't recommend going that many places in that short amount of time if you're putting it all together yourself.

But it was really illuminating! First of all from the perspective of coming back and then like that was a boundary that had been broken like for me as a performer. I had felt before like you don't just pick up and go. You don't just go somewhere unless you have like a big giant plan and you're going to make money and all of that and it kind of showed me like there are other things to be gained.

There were... there was so much richness in the experience again of connecting with people through music. It was very humbling and also very uplifting to see people respond to me as an artist and to my music in different countries and also to see them not respond and realize that maybe there are certain venues where I don't want to play and I don't want to be a bar band, like that's not what I want to do and I'm doing that right now and it feels bad and I don't like it. So that's something that, for me personally, is not going to play into my further plans.

It was very eye opening and definitely boundary breaking.

Like everyone I've had the pleasure of interviewing, so much of what Cassandra has done has been boundary breaking.

I want to thank all the guests I've had on so far for sharing their wisdom with us and being open enough to also share the roadblocks they've had to overcome to gain that wisdom.

I look forward to all the future spotlights to come and I thank you for listening. I hope this round-up has inspired you to break some rules and rewrite your own as you forge ahead as a music-preneur.

There isn't a blueprint for this stuff, so roll up your sleeves and get to building your vision as you see it. You'll learn as you go what needs remodeling.

Here's to a rockin 2019! I'll be back next week with some more inspiration and rock sources to help you on your path to success, whatever that may be for you.

Be sure to check the show notes for links to all past Spotlights and to my 2019

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Until next time, Rockstar! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next week so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.