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How to make money BUSKING #2

From living on the street to riding high in the charts

Article taken from: Stuff - Feb 07 2017

Source: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/89175470/from-living-on-the-street-to-riding-high-in-the-charts?rm=m>

Less than a year ago Mitch James was busking for a living in Europe, but he was also homeless and living on the streets. Now, the 21-year-old Kiwi singer-songwriter is riding high in the charts with his hit Move on. He is now signed with Sony records, and using his experience in Europe and New Zealand as inspiration for his music.

The moment you admit to yourself that you're going to be sleeping on the street, that's the toughest. I used my guitar case as a pillow while sleeping in parks, under shop windows and train stations. In the winter it was freezing cold so I wore everything I had, while rubbish trucks passed me by and drug dealers circulated.

When you're sleeping rough, you try to always stay as low profile as possible. I'm not exactly huge. I was mugged a couple of times and my backpack was stolen. Luckily my guitar wasn't. My song No Fixed Abode is about that time. In Amsterdam, a policeman asked me if I had an address and I said I didn't, so he wrote on the ticket No Fixed Abode.

For a couple of months I was living in my car in New Zealand. I wasn't seeing eye to eye with my family and I had nowhere to stay. I bought a crappy mattress and a crappy \$400 station-wagon, and that ended up being my home. It's ten times better than sleeping on the street but it's still not The Ritz.

Walking down Queen Street in Auckland, you can see the huge disparity between the rich and poor. If you have a pair of eyes, you can see it for yourself. It's horrible to see so many people struggling. I know exactly how they feel because I've been there.

I was uploading my music videos and gradually I built up a following. One of my videos went semi-viral. I ended up coming back to New Zealand and signing a record deal with Sony.

Everyone sees that things are going well for me now, but I have put in a ton of work and I went through a load of hard times. If you're on struggle street, never lose sight of what you want to do with your life. Some people just need a bit of help to get there.

Music was escapism from all my problems. I wasn't a bad student but I was never close to being a good one. There was a scandal at school and for a period of about two years I was avoided like the black plague. I was bullied, not physically, but kids just left me alone.

We were all kids once and we all looked up to people. To think that kids look up to me now is crazy, but I always give kids the time of day. In a way I'm really grateful for that experience at school, because that's when I started locking myself in the music centre and playing guitar. It was the genesis of my entire music career.

My songs are always about real experiences. One of my lyrics is 'Crazy world that we live in. Dollar and the Pound make the world go round and we still chose to accept it'. For me, that sums up the state of affairs in the world right now. We are obsessed with personal gain and power and money and we're losing track of what really matters at the end of the day. Community is Number 1.

Where there is profit, there is loss and we have to focus more on the people who are losing.

Millions of families in Syria have lost their homes and their families are being torn apart. Syrian mothers love their children just as much as our mothers love us. Just because they are half the world away, it doesn't make their core values any different.

When you see that raw footage of people saying that this might be the last thing they ever do, it doesn't get more real than that.

It's sad so many people are engrossed in social media, so stuck within their Facebook pages that they're losing their worldliness. It pisses me off. We have to care about each other more.

Now I'm on good terms with my family. I have a roof over my head and a record deal, but I will never lose sight of what I've been through. None of us can. Our past experiences make us who we are. I will never be a money or fame driven person or any of those empty things, because of what I've been through. For that, I'm thankful.

So - If you enjoy music or singing why don't you consider using your talents to earn an income like Mitch did busking?

I've checked the websites of our largest councils to find out how you can apply for a busker license. I'm pleased to let you know that it's a really quick & easy process. If you're 14 & under you'll need to have signed permission of a parent or guardian.

I've copied & pasted the key details that you'd need to complete to give you an idea of whats likely to be asked. If you want to find out more go on-line to find out the process for your local council. It'll be pretty similar to the one below:

Application for a street performance (busking) licence

Full name:

Address of applicant:

Contact number:

Email:

Type of performance

What type of activity will you be performing? **You'd answer this with a short clear description of your act.**

If your performance is pavement art please see our website for a guide to using public space.

If your performance is a group act, list the names of all the other members. Please note that once the licence is issued, any additional members will require a new licence.

Location of performance

What suburb(s) will you primarily be performing in? Give a description of the areas that you want to busk: **Example, Auckland CBD, Takapuna Shopping area, Lambton Quay, etc**

Do you need a special licence?

Does your performance involve the use of live animals, flammable materials or dangerous objects e.g. knives, chainsaws etc.? Yes or **No (keep it simple to start with e hoa (friend))**

If you answered yes - then theres more forms to fill out and questions asked

Signature of applicant:

Date:

If the applicant is under 14 years of age, parent/ guardian consent is required.& they fill out the details below:

Parent/ guardian full name:

Address

Signature:

Phone number:

Date:

Then: Submit your application: Online, by Post drop your application off at any Auckland Council service centre (too easy!).

No Fixed Abode (Lyrics)

By Mitch James

Is there anyone else but me?
Walked the plank and kicked my feet
And I'm drowning here
Drowning in the words you speak
Drowning in this drink, I've peaked
And it's downhill from here

Need to get out of here
These four walls are turning me crazy
I think I might lose it
But if the door is closed and the water is rising

You're the missing puzzle piece to solve this

Saturated
I can't breathe
Overhead
I can't see
Stranded in these waters alone
Look around and all I see
Is empty space, it's misty
Searching for a way to get home

But where is home?
No fixed abode
No fixed abode, oh, oh

Crazy times that we live in
Dollar and the pound make the world go round
And we still choose to accept it

Crazy times that we live in
Dollar and the pound make the world go round
And we still choose to accept it

I'm not waiting for another day
Well I can't, I can't
We're just looking for the chance to say
That we all, we all feel this way

Like we're
Saturated
We can't breathe
Overhead
We can't see
Stranded in these waters alone
Look around and all we see
Is empty space, it's misty
Searching for a way to get home
But where is home?
No fixed abode
No fixed abode, oh, oh
(Repeat again)

Mitch James



Task: Find your ideal starting location.

Take the time to scout out some possible places. If you know you're going to feel a bit apprehensive at first make sure that you choose somewhere not too busy. Another tip for those first few times is to make your performances outside of the busy times which are: before work, lunch-time & after-work. Also choose a place where there won't be too many other buskers. Now you've chosen a possible locations go through your repertoire in your head imagining your entire performance. This is called 'visualization' & it's a technique you can use in many different situations. I used this technique during my representative hockey career to go over



set-plays. Always remember that: Practice makes perfect.

Kia kaha & Arohanui to you Darly