

Student 4: High Achieved
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Midnight Youth

“One of the biggest musical success stories to come out of New Zealand in the last few years” – amplifier.co.nz (Review of album, ‘World Comes Calling’)

Midnight Youth were a New Zealand Rock Band that had released two studio recorded albums before going their separate ways in 2013. For a relatively short life-span, the band was highly successful, touring throughout Australasia, the United States and Asia. Forming in 2006 at Rangitoto College to enter SFRQ, the band eventually consisted of Jeremy Redmore (lead vocals), Simon Oscroft (lead guitar), Aidan Bartlett (drums), Matt Warman (bass) and Nick Campbell (guitar). Incredibly, a year later, in 2007, the band landed an opening slot for the massive act *Incubus*. Two years after that in 2009, Midnight Youth played the music festival SXSW in Texas. ①

In 2008, with an average age of 21, the band got themselves to New York to work with producer Terence Dover. With him they recorded ‘The Brave Don’t Run’, their first album, which rocked the New Zealand music scene with the single ‘The Letter’ which peaked at #20 in the NZ Top 40 count down. The song was the soundtrack of the summer. All was going extremely well as the debut album went Platinum and peaked at #2 on the NZ album chart. ②

Following the successful debut album and single, came track number 2 off the album, ‘All On Our Own’. This song had even more of an impact on the NZ music scene, as the certification reached Gold and it sold 7,500 copies. Both songs ‘The Letter’ and ‘All On Our Own’ had very happy vibes with powerful drums, clean guitars and driving bass, although, at a switch the band was capable of unleashing an entirely different sound, one of cymbals crashing, distorted guitars and rough, aggressive vocals, yet still remaining within the genre that Midnight Youth had fallen in. This is proven by the single ‘Cavalry’ a slow paced and heavy track that appealed to many, yet did not have the same feel as the other two songs.

Their next album ‘World Comes Calling’ (released 2011) was a terrific success as they completely broke free from what is classified as a “New Zealand sound” to showcase a more international feel and sound. For this album they utilised state-of-the-art equipment at York Street studios in Auckland and created another rock legacy for their fans. ②

It all looked like it was going well for Midnight Youth with the album receiving a 4/5 from the New Zealand Herald, when, in 2013 Midnight Youth announced that Jeremy Redmore, the lead singer, was quitting the band because he wanted to pursue a solo career. They then announced on their Facebook page that their last show would be at Homegrown of that year.

Midnight Youth formed at a time of a rock and roll drought in New Zealand music. The only thing worth remembering was Shihad’s single ‘Beautiful Machine’ which was echoing throughout the streets. Surely Midnight Youth must have identified that and aimed directly at their specific audience as ‘Cavalry’ aggressively pushed itself over the top of most pop songs that were floating around.

The overall sound of 'The Brave Don't Run' is rock-anthem like. It's back-to-back heavy riffs and aggressive sounding music established Midnight Youth upon the NZ music scene. Midnight Youth were heavily influenced by the likes of *Incubus* and other mainstream rock bands. While being quite adventurous with their music their songs would always have a standard structure. For example:

Intro	These would usually go for the standard 4, 8 or 12 bars as the time signature to the majority of their music was 4/4.
Verse	
Chorus	
Verse	
Chorus	
Bridge	
Chorus	

The song, 'Who Said You're Free' was written during a period of which the election for a new Prime Minister and change of Government was cluttering the climate. They released this song as a single, triggering the audience of teenagers and unhappy citizens to take their side and enjoy their music while protesting the way New Zealand was being run. The song has a very catchy and melodic guitar riff throughout the chorus, with heavily compressed vocals and lyrics such as 'Who said you're free? We're just trying to live a good life, look at us'. The underlying meaning to this was that the band felt that the second the public began to enjoy life and break free from their day-to-day structure the government would step in and pay attention to ensure that they would fall back into their expected template. 3

Midnight Youth may not have had as drastic of an impact upon NZ music as a band like 'Shidhad' or 'The Datsuns', but it did influence many students and younger musicians to follow out a musical project that could possibly be a success and sell.

Ultimately, for their short-lived time as a band, they had a vibrant effect on the New Zealand music industry and certainly dominated local radio stations at their peak. Midnight Youth has influenced and inspired many throughout this country including myself as a musician. Knowing that they went through the SFRQ apprenticeship and made it big out in the cut-throat world that is the 'music industry' is truly inspirational. 4

Bibliography

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