

Opensouls - www.opensouls.co.nz

Opensouls are a collective of musicians, both new and established within the New Zealand music scene. First and foremost, opensouls see music as a form of communication. Indeed, they see it as one of the earliest forms of communication for mankind. Opensouls have taken on a commitment to reflect within their music messages that reflect our national psyche. The aim of the group is to perform material within the international genre of live hip-hop, which encompasses the thoughts and feelings specific, and peculiar to New Zealand and New Zealanders. The group also wants to help develop a sense of place for the music and for the listeners of this music within New Zealand.

Following the break up of hip hop group 'Fifth floor' in 1999, a few key members set out to form a new group under the name 'Opensouls'. Under the new banner the intention was to take what they had learnt from an underground scene and create new music that was accessible to a greater audience. This has been achieved to date through live performances and radio airplay. The public has been exposed to the 'Opensouls sound' particularly on the B-net radio stations. On these stations in Wellington and Christchurch they have been voted (by public vote) number one with their latest of radio only releases 'in your hands', whilst the previous two singles also broke into the top ten in Auckland and Wellington. The use of songs through the b.net stations has helped bring more people along to the live shows. Seeing the live shows has helped bring the people back.

Live shows are an important component of the opensouls group, and therefore they strive to make a performance memorable for both performer, and audience member alike. Playing events in the past such as Summer Series, and local university orientations, have helped the band hone their live performance skills, and furthermore, attain upcoming gigs that will increase the profile of the group.

More recently, the group has completed a highly successful series of shows from Auckland to Wellington. In the near future, the band is to perform at an anti-P benefit gig for Te Rarawa, once again looking at exposing the band to a different audience, and exposing different audiences to opensouls.

Opensouls is comprised of seven fulltime members with much experience within New Zealand's arts scene. The members are:

Jeremy Toy

Jeremy has played extensively throughout New Zealand. Along the way, he has played with groups of a diverse nature, from the Rodger Fox Big Band, through to established favourites such as Che Fu, Scribe, and Anika Moa. More recently, Jeremy has represented New Zealand at the international Red Bull Music Academy, held in South Africa. Other past attendees include Chris Cox (well known Auckland D.J.), and Ricki Gooch (drummer/Trinity Roots). Jeremy is has also been a guitar teacher since 1996.

Julien Dyne

Julien is an artist/musician who plays also for Verse 2. In conjunction with his excellent musical abilities, Julien also was named as top painter for two consecutive years at Elam School of Fine Arts. Son of Wellington Jazz legend Paul Dyne, Julien has brought to the group a wide range of musical influences, and styles. He attended the Red Bull Music Academy in Rome 2004 where he had a one on one lesson with drumming legend Bernard Purdie.

Steph Brown

Without a doubt, one of the most talented keyboard players within Auckland. She holds a BA in Jazz Performance, as well as teaching at many schools such as Avondale College, and teaching at the University of Auckland. Steph also performs with Christchurch diva Anika Moa, and is constantly in demand.

Harlin Davey (a.k.a Buttafingers) – Ngati Runui

Harlin is the turntablist and also graphic designer for the group. A seasoned performer with Maori groups, Harlin brings his personal touch of table musicianship to the group.

Bjorn Petersen – Ngati Maniapoto

Bjorn is the front person of the group in many ways. As lead vocalist, his rhymes incorporate his views of the world in which he inhabits. Fiercely influenced by his bi-cultural roots, he strives to forward both his, and his audiences knowledge of things pertaining to Maori, and non-Maori alike. A relative newcomer to the music scene, Bjorn's talent on the mic always touches and impresses his audience as he shares a part of himself with them.

Isaac Aesili – Ngati Tuwharetoa, Tapuika

Isaac, otherwise known as brozac, is a seasoned traveler within the music scene. He has played for groups such as Solaa (Christchurch) and Mark de Clive Lowe and recorded for groups such as the Dubwize Sound System. At present he is also one half of this information, working with Chris Cox. Recently granted his Masters in Political Science, looking at the effects of globalisation indigenous peoples rights of the fourth world, Isaac brings to the group a political awareness which is fostering within us all.

Chip Matthews a.k.a. Pops, a.k.a Koro – Nga Puhi, Te Rarawa

Chip has been involved within the music industry for the past decade. Along the way he has performed and/or recorded with groups such as the New LoungeHead (Jazz album of the year 1998), Mark de Clive Lowe, House of Downtown, King Kapisi, Scribe, Unique, and is a regular member of Che Fu and the Krates. He is older in age, yet slower on the sports field, thus brings a delicate harmony (minor third) to the group.

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