

ONE TO WATCH

In this issue,
Peter Scrivener
talks to local
singer-songwriter
Rachel Jepson



Sometimes the best songs are those drawn from personal experience. Heaton Norris singer-songwriter

Rachel Jepson has a wealth to draw on, combining her life on stage with one as a mental health counsellor for musicians.

"A lot of my lyrics are about mental health, based on people I know and my own life," she says, "They are melancholic but uplifting."

Rachel began singing big band jazz at Parris Wood high school. After her sensational voice "had been validated" by the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, the 18-year-old packed a bag and headed to London. "I didn't go to university," she explains, "I was hungry to succeed musically so I sang in many different bands, worked as a session singer, a backing vocalist and featured on dance records. I thought I had a thick skin - I didn't."

A recent survey called 'Does Music Make You Sick' found that 78% of the 2,000 musicians questioned, had suffered with mental health issues. "That survey gave me legitimacy," says the 37-year-old mum of two, who set up her counselling business in January 2017. "There were so few services to help musicians with mental health issues, although more charities are now appearing - like Music Support which is backed by Robbie Williams. "So many young people think they are the best in the world, but nobody warns them they will have to deal with rejection. You put your baby out there, bare your soul to the world. You need a thick skin but then critics need to have more feelings and think how they are rejecting because there are lots of vulnerable musicians."

Rachel, who has developed a one-day course, speaks at conferences and has written a book - 'Mental Health in the Music Industry, a guide' - receives calls from "all over the world"

for her services. "They are musicians, but it's not always industry related," she says. "If you already have anxiety and depression issues then the music industry is tough because even if you do have success, it's hard to recreate it again and again."

Rachel is still excited when she is playing new songs live for the first time, although she admits she doesn't care as much what other people think as she used to. However, she adds, "I always want a record of what I've created. The thought of not recording the music troubles me greatly. In 30 years, I want to be able to listen back to it - it's not always for other people."

For more details on Rachel's counselling and for booking onto the course visit www.counsellingformusicians.co.uk

→ For Rachel's music updates visit <https://www.facebook.com/rachel.kern.775>