

New course motivates students beyond the music

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Music industry students

North Bay Nipissing News

By [Steve Pitt](#)

NIBISIING – Twelve Grade 12 music students from Nibisiing Secondary are learning the ropes of the music business as well as the chords. They are taking part in an innovative new program that teaches them about the behind-the-scenes aspects of the music industry.

“There are many careers in music other than on stage performer,” says Mark Burns, who teaches the course at Nibisiing, just outside North Bay on the Nipissing First Nation. “There is studio production, music agents, public relations and song writing just to name a few careers.”



Officially known as the Music Business Course, the program was developed by Toronto-based music management company Coalition Music. They created a registered charity called TEMPO with the mission statement “to create opportunities for high school students to bridge the gap from talented artist to a music industry professional by providing business education and music mentoring that is inclusive, accessible and at no cost to students or schools.”

TEMPO’s Music Business course was available to Toronto high schools since 2011. In 2013, it was offered at Wasse Abin high school on the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island.

“When we heard of this course at Wasse Abin, we looked into it and decided to offer it here as well,” Mark Burns said. “The response from our students was terrific.”

Justice Penasse, a guitar player and vocalist, is one of the Nibisiing students accepted into this year’s Music Business program.

“I’d like to be a professional song writer some day but this course will help me figure out what else is out there in the music industry,” she says. Penasse says an attraction of the course is a trip to Toronto to visit a professional music studio, where each student records a song of their own creation. Her music is influenced by both western rock and Japanese Anime.

“I’d like to translate my favourite Japanese songs into English someday,” she says.

Dakota Heon, a keyboard player and vocalist taking the program, does not have a definite career in mind yet but he wants to work somewhere in the music industry.

“A course like this can open doors,” he says, “And from there I’ll find my way.” Heon too is looking forward to going to Toronto to professionally record some of his songs. “Right now my songs are just recorded on my cell phone. It’s going to be really something to hear how they sound in a professional studio.”

Burns thinks limiting the course to only twelve students per term has been a positive.

“It creates a drive to succeed. Every student who is in this program has worked very hard to be here. They had to have good grades and a strong attendance record. Before being accepted, they had to submit an essay stating why they wanted to get into this program. Students who wish to participate in this program next year know what will be expected of them so this helps their grades not just in music but across the board.”

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