



How did you get your start in the music industry? Who are some of your influences?

I graduated college and started working in television. I had a good job behind the camera but I knew I wanted to be on stage with the mic in front of me. I knew I wanted to be in the music industry so I resigned and starting an independent record label and signed myself \$0 signing bonus. LOL. A few months later I released my first album. I've been grinding toward my goals and living my dream ever since.

Tupac, Biggie and Lauryn Hill were my musical influences. James Prince (Rap-A-Lot Records) and Master P (No Limit Records) were my business influences. They have accomplished quite a lot running their own independent record labels. Willie Nelson is also a musical inspiration and business influence.

As an independent musician you oversee everything in your career. How do you go about planning, organizing and carry out all the work associated with running your own career?

The short answer is I started off just doing everything on my own but over time I recruited like minded individuals to hire to work toward building a company.

I recognized from the get go that I was an entrepreneur and business owner. So back in the day when I would go to BookPeople and Barnes and Noble and research and invest in books about songwriting and mixing and mastering, I'd also buy books about running your own business. I then began to realize that the music business is unique but at the same time, it's just business. And there is a wealth of info about running your own business out there.

What are some of your challenges as an independent musician?

1. Balancing the admin and creative sides...
2. Marketing on limited funds...but I've found creativity and ingenuity can solve that.
3. The amount of work involved is a lot. When you are organizing your gigs, your PR, your releases and your finances, the music can get lost for a while, plus with that amount of work, you have to be prepared to just get by for a while! BUT if you can make it through those tough times, you will have learned how to do things right, how to make money and how to be successful. Then you will have control of your career. And you can steer it where you want to go.

What allows me to deal with the consistent challenges is that this is what I dedicated my life to doing. This is my career. This is my life. So everything I put into it is a good investment...because I'm investing in me.

At what point did you realize you might be able to make a living as a full time musician?

To be a full time musician or better stated a full time artist was my goal from day one. The goal was not to perform at a certain venue, or go platinum or win a Grammy. You can do all those things and still not enjoy a long career and continuously make a living as a full time artist. So for me, my only goal was to position myself to be a full time artist. So when I started, I knew I would accomplish my goal. Success was the only option. I didn't know how long it would take, but I knew it would happen.

Earlier this month you launched your own touring festival. SaulPaul's Dream in 3D Music & Arts festival. How has the festival been coming along? What have been some of your favorite moments?

The festival has been great. On our first run here locally, we booked 10 dates and had attendance of 10,000+! The festival is a touring cultural arts experience bringing live music and interactive activities to middle school and high school campuses nationwide. During SaulPaul's #DreamIn3D Music and Arts Festival attendees get to experience a top notch concert experience as well as engage in interactive activities highlighting journalism, film, fine arts, fashion, photography and dance. Locally, we were able to have awesome sponsors like ReRoute Music Group, Fender Guitars, LoudMouth Rentals, The City of Austin, The Police Activities League of Austin and KIND Bars.

My favorite moment was the actual fruition of the vision. It took a team to make it happen. And the vision was so crazy, that I couldn't tell anybody on my squad till I had completed all the groundwork. Otherwise, they would've prolly shot it down and called me crazy. So my favorite moment was when the drone went up and we filmed 1000 festival goers jumping up and down at the concert on day one!

You have performed for, partnered with the NFL, NBA, SXSW and others. You even have a mobile gaming app. What advice would you give to the dreamers (musicians, entrepreneurs, aspiring music industry professionals)?

Just Do It. Start, fail and learn. And Do It Again. And keep doing this til you get what you're grinding for.

And if you succeed. Celebrate. And set your sights on the next goal. And start the process again.

How have you evolved as a musician over the years?

I started off purely improvisational freestyle rapping then got into songwriting. Then I fell in love with the Classical Acoustic Guitar. Then I discovered loop pedals. And then my style and my live show was born. Acoustic Hip Hop. Part Rapper/Part Singer Songwriter who blends his voice, his guitar and his loop pedal to create a live show that is nothing less than an EXPERIENCE.

You are SaulPaul, Musician with a Message. What do you hope people take away from your music?

That you can #DreamIn3D. I personally transitioned from tragedy to triumph and was able to make my dream a reality. Why not you?

What is your favorite thing about the Austin music scene. Who are a couple of your favorite Austin musicians?

I love that it fosters an environment that allows an artist to innovate. That's what allowed me to develop my unique style.

A couple of my favorite Austin musicians are B.L.U.E the Rapper and Tree G. My favorite producer is Levester White.

If you had a friend visiting Austin for the first time, where would you tell they had to go to hear some live #ATXMusic?

The Historic Victory Grill

What are some things you would like to see the ATX Music Office do in future/better for local musicians?

I #Salute the ATX Music Office for what they do. I travel the country and visit many cities and most cities don't have what we have here. Maybe the ATX Music Office should mentor other cities so that other local musicians across the country can have a resource like we have here. I think it's less about what the ATX Music Office can do to be better and more about my fellow artists figuring out how to get the most from the ATX Music Office.

Anything else you would like to tell our readers?

Visit my website www.SaulPaul.com and check out either of my TEDx Talks where I talk about making your dreams a reality.