

Dave Leondi BIO

My name is Dave Leondi and I was born in Scranton, PA (from The Office, and yes it's real!). I'm from a music family and I could read and write music before I could read and write English. (handwritten song picture). Piano was my first instrument and my first live show was at age 5 in a giant church. I started playing lead trumpet in the orchestra at age 10 and as most teenage boys do, I got myself an electric guitar at 15. (young playing picture) I competed locally around New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey in my high schools competition jazz band and won some awards. (picture from jazz)

But what really excited me about playing music was its creation. Music, its meanings, and inspirations, seemed to simultaneously come from everywhere and nowhere. Despite this, it seemed to carry so much meaning. Whether it was for a party, for a funeral, a beach picnic, or just a lazy Sunday, there was always a mood that could be created with just some sounds. You could change how everyone felt with just a few notes. This excited me a lot.

So naturally I was always fascinated with popular music, songwriting, formulas, and things like "what makes this chord sad/happy/pensive?" It really made me think, because these were just sounds, so how and why could some seemingly random vibrations change your mental state?

To answer these questions, I went to NYU to study Music Theory. I minored in Piano performance and Film Scoring, and I got to do a lot of fun stuff there. I scored and studied with amazing composers and artists like Ira Newborn ("Sixteen Candles", "The Naked Gun", "Ferris Bueller's Day Off"), Ron Sadoff ("The Moon and the Sun", "Demand A Plan"), and I was also fortunate to be able to study and write with Dr. Youngmi Ha (Composition/Theory), Dr. Justin Dello Joio (Orchestration/Arrangement), Dr. Dinu Ghezzo (Conducting), and Dr. Thomas MacFarlane (Theory/Composition). I was lucky enough to score a bunch of student festival films as well as conduct the NYU orchestra (one of my own pieces and Beethoven's Egmont Overture).

At NYU I also met my future band mates and best friends Nick Wold, Chris Bagamery, and Andrew McGovern. We formed a band called "Motive" which would later be called "Dreamers" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreamers_\(band\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreamers_(band))

We had some mild success, had some music videos on MTV (when that was still a thing), did some US national tours, and in 2013, played 9 showcase shows at South by Southwest (SXSW), the largest music, art, and film festival on the world. The NYTimes and CBS featured the band on TV and in the newspaper, hailing us "the Strokes 2.0". Tour partners included Walk The Moon, Bear Hands, and The Vaccines (insert pics).

We also had some modelling gigs with Dior, Jean-Paul Gautier, and Twelve Magazine. (12 mag picture and Dior hot tub pic)

One of my favourite things to do with the band was co-write. During our time, I was fortunate enough to write tracks with brilliant minds like Sam Hollander (Rolling Stone's "Producer of the Year", One Direction, Panic! at the Disco, Tom Jones), Dave Katz (Katy Perry, Neon Trees, Train), Jason Finkel (Mariah Carey, Kanye West, Britney Spears) and Caleb Shreve, AKA Chuck Brody

(Jennifer Lopez, Phantogram). I was also lucky enough to write and record in some amazing studios, including Sony Music Studios/Fireplace Studios, Converse Rubber Tracks Recording, and Wreckroom Studios w/Adrian Grenier.

In most of these sessions, I just sat quietly and just listened and learned. These were masters, they already had success and money, so why was I here? The only logical reason I could come up with was that I was just talented and driven enough that they wanted to pass their knowledge onto me. So I soaked up every tidbit of information about melody crafting, choruses, top lines, hooks, and beats that I could from these brilliant artists, writers, and producers.

All that being said, I didn't *really* discover what I had set out to accomplish. I certainly learned the song-writing formulas, how to craft hits, and did a lot of crazy shit (like a nude interview with Adrien Grenier in Austin, TX talking about music with models while they barbecued for us) but nothing that really brought me closer to the answers I wanted.

I left the band over creative differences, and began to branch out on my own. I started honing my production and engineering skills, and had the pleasure of working with the super creative Mark Alston in NYC. After NYC, I moved to the West Coast and starting working with David Schuler (2x Grammy nominated producer/film maker) out in LA (pics) who showed me (which I am very grateful for) that I did have a voice that people wanted to hear.

Then came COVID which fucked up everything for everyone. Right in the middle of the lockdowns and quarantines, I moved to London in May 2020 to (finally) be with my wife (who I had been having a 7,000 mile long distance relationship with for 3 years) which was a blessing and curse. I was so happy to finally be where I felt I belonged, but no one would hire a foreigner expecting a nice pay-check while everything in the nation was closing, shutting down, and revamping business models.

The music industry changed, and I would argue it changed for the better. Yes, we missed live shows for a minute, but we found new ways to express our creativity, ask questions, and find meaning. I joined two bands, and I entered the OpenMicUK singing/songwriting competition on a whim. I ended up being a grand finalist (seventh place if I remember correctly?) (pictures) among thousands of entries in 2020. I also began writing for the Camden Records Blog (links) which gives advice about recording sessions, writing, and production/studio life.

In December 2020, while I was recording at Studio 13 (Damian Alban of the Gorillaz' studio) (pic) one of the engineers told me about a production program at Abbey Road Studios. Again, on a very last minute whim, I immediately applied, and after two interview rounds and a live performance for the department heads, I was accepted and took the last spot in intake (pics).

It's hard to fully describe my time at Abbey Road. It was thrilling, so much fun, so scary, undeniably challenging, but ultimately, so rewarding. I was fortunate to be able to help record strings in Studio 1 (where so many famous film soundtracks were recorded) with John Dunkerley and performed and recorded in Studio 2 (where The Beatles and Pink Floyd recorded) with Haydn Bendall.

The program at Abbey Road focused on all aspects of the studio experience: engineering, production, DAWs, microphone placement and technique, editing, mixing, mastering, copyright

law, royalty collection, record and production deals, publishing and sync rights, marketing, electronics, sampling, music theory, orchestration, analogue hardware, film sound, live sound, and advanced studio consoles.

I received my Advanced Diploma in Music Production and Sound Engineering from Abbey Road in February 2022, and I was the only member of my class to win two mixing awards. I'm a Certified Avid Pro Tools User and have a very advanced proficiency in Logic Pro (Apple does not give out Logic Certifications anymore).

My most recent work at Abbey Road includes producing and mixing for Sophie Lloyd (Machine Gun Kelly)(pics), Simon Reed (link/credits), Saachisen (link/credits), JinnyB (links) and a Britney Spears cover with Sophie Burrell (pics/credits). My wife and I now own and operate Rosslyn Hill Studio, a songwriting and music production studio in Hampstead, London (pics/link).

Here now in 2024, I still haven't found all the answers in music that I have been searching for. But I think that is why we still create, and that's why it can be fun and amazing one day and terrible and arduous the next. There isn't an answer and there isn't an end, but we get closer to understanding the more we do it. Perhaps there isn't an answer to find, and maybe just asking the questions themselves help us understand each other a little bit more. The journey just keeps going, and I'm very grateful to still be on the train going somewhere.