

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: Anisha Thomas



Photo: Kathryn Johnston.

by Lorna Gordon

The music industry is notoriously difficult to get started in, and that's not just for bands and singers, but for everyone in the business.

Anisha Thomas has always loved music, she started playing piano at age six and had dreams of one day being a concert pianist. When she hit her teens she began composing her own music which led to her being accepted to study at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music where she majored in composition.

Once Anisha had her degree, she felt a bit lost with what to do next. She was in a band for a while and then worked freelance, where she came across many road blocks and people telling her she wasn't good enough to be in her chosen industry.

"Film and TV composing is a very competitive field and I had some hot shots tell me at the beginning, 'you're just one fish in this big ocean, why are you even trying' etc. At the time I found it quite discouraging, sadly those people are still telling other people the same thing," Anisha says.

When she had enough experience under her belt she started her own sound and production business, Sound – How, and decided to take a stance and stand up for other minorities in the industry.

"I had a lot of doubt about starting my own business but I had a goal. It wasn't just about the music, it was about being able to contribute on another level. Our team is 90 per cent women and I'm able to help connect them with other amazing women in this industry. Not only does this help them, but it helps our clients contribute to the need for diversity,"

comments Anisha.

This is not the only way Anisha and Sound – How give back to the community. They want to set an example of how a business can be a stand out social enterprise as well, and started the 5 to 1 project.

Every fifth project they take on, they give 15 per cent of the profit to a deserving cause. They discuss the choice of charity with their clients and come to an agreement as to where the donation will go to.

Anisha explained it's not just about giving back financially, but supporting people who might not otherwise get work or the experience they need to get a job.

"This industry is the survival of the fittest. You face a lot of rejections and need to sustain your state of mind through it all; so many people quit because it is hard to take. We are proud to give people a chance and have them as interns so they can gain experience in the industry which will help them get work," she explained.

Anisha's skills and determination to make the industry a better place for minorities to work in is paying off.

She has been recognised with awards in the Film and Television industry, and as word spreads is getting more work in Australia. She is also working remotely with more and more clients in the USA, where she hopes to continue to spread her views on social inclusion through the workplace.

Anisha's example shows us that by giving back we don't lose out.

If more businesses adopted an attitude of inclusion, people in minorities would have a much easier time to find employment and our society as a whole would benefit.

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