

Law with all that

INTERVIEW WITH JAZZ PIANIST DANIEL GASSIN
OF KEOGH & CO



Daniel Gassin is a jazz pianist and commercial lawyer. With one album already released and in excess of 20 gigs each month, this recently admitted lawyer appears to be a master of the work/life balance. He took a couple of minutes out with the YLJ in our quest to reveal the secrets of a balanced artistic lifestyle.

Josephine Parkinson: Are you a musician/lawyer, or the other way around?

Daniel Gassin: No comment.

Why jazz?

There is a nice balance between being a musician, which is a serious art form with an established lexicon and, on the other hand, having room for self expression. Jazz exists on spectrum somewhere between stiflingly serious and completely out there. There isn't the same scope in law. There isn't the same space for self-expression and irreverence that I find with jazz.

Where did it all begin?

I started playing piano when I was four – or three-and-a-half. It all started with "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

Biggest achievement?

No blockbuster or blinding success, but one memorable achievement was while playing with Andy Sugg's band. We were joined by sax player Dave Liebman. After the session I heard that he liked my playing. When that comes from someone who is truly world class, it's a great feeling.

Does jazz influence your work life?

Only the late gigs. On the other hand, work does influence my jazz. It's a bit of a release valve. I play better and more expressively after a hard day at the office.

As a young lawyer, how do you manage your time and competing pressures?

With great difficulty and energy drinks. My gracious boss allows me to work a four-day week. It's about human working hours and valuing efficiency rather than attendance.

Have you ever turned down a gig due to work commitments?

I have, but rarely. There is no real time overlap. There is no such thing as 11 o'clock on Monday in music.

If no jazz?

Life is more satisfying [with jazz]. I am more fulfilled with both than with one or the other. I can balance my inner desires to be creative and artistic, and still allow for career development and achievement.

Do your colleagues support your gigs?

My work colleagues attend my gigs, which is a really good thing. Lawyers are far more interested in my gigs than my muso friends. My muso friends don't respect it as much – it's just more music to them. Plus, they have their own gigs to play.

So, are your two worlds complementary?

They are complementary in the sense that law is a daytime occupation and jazz occupies the night.

Favourite jazz musician?

Herbie Hancock.

Favourite High Court Judge?

Justice Kirby because he can beat box.

If you were to set a case to some jazz, what would it be?

It would have to be *Mabo* because it was really long and got to a decent result in the end.

For all information see www.jazz-planet.com.au/danielgassin. Daniel Gassin was interviewed by Josephine Parkinson of the Department of Justice. ■