

Muso's DIY track

LAUREN MITCHELL

CASTLEMAINE musician John Phillips has long known the power of a pop song.

He was first seduced as a kid, secretly listening to the Beatles on a crystal radio set.

Later in life, as a professional musician, he saw first-hand what a ripping riff or catchy line can achieve, through rubbing shoulders with some of the country's biggest: INXS, AC/DC and Midnight Oil.

John spent his formative years in a trail of bands, such as Goanna and new wave punk outfit Kix, later fronting Urban Principle and Pipelines.

"It's been a great journey and lots of stories, people and experiences along the way," he says.

Nowadays, he's passing on his skills to a new generation of musos through the music industry skills course at BRIT – a kind of school of rock for year 11 and 12 students. And, he's practicing what he teaches.

John's latest recording is the pop song *Put the past behind you*, launched through his new website www.johnphillips.com.au.

It's an infectious melody-driven track inspired by personal experience.

"For many years I struggled with the fact that my parents divorced and never resolved their ill feeling towards each other," he said.

"Their stuff became my baggage, and this song is about moving on from that. It is about where I am now and being happy with my own family and place. I think the song taps into that universal yearning for renewal, growth and new beginnings."

It's also tapped into a wider audience.

"A lot of people have said they love it because it has a resonance for them and they can relate to it," John said.

"A lot of people see the song as a healing thing and that's what it was for me, a letting go and moving on thing."

John said by embracing new technologies and the power of the internet, independent musicians have an alternative way to find success – they no longer need to rely on getting noticed by a record company.



ON TRACK: John Phillips has released a new single. Picture: DARREN ROBERTS

Last week John received an email from a Santa Monica radio agency, who'd found his track on line and have shown interest in pitching it to radio stations.

John said it's almost a return to St Kilda's Crystal Ballroom era of Australian music, where fledgling bands would make their own posters, press their own records, and forge their own way into people's play lists.

"It was a melting pot of creativity with a real DIY ethos," he said.

"And now we're doing it again."

John's experience of launching the new site and releasing the new song has spurred on a fresh wave of creativity.

He is collaborating with other regional musicians on new material, and is working on two new Latin electronic-style tracks, influenced by the likes of bossa nova. He said this

region harboured many professional musicians that were tapping into each other's talents. *Put the past behind you* was produced and recorded by David Williams in his Daylesford studio.

A great mentor for John, David has worked with the likes of Weddings, Parties, Anything; and Mondo Rock.

"We brought in local musicians for the recording, I'm on lead vocals and guitar, Peter Rowland on guitar and bass, Al Stanley on drums, David Williams on keyboards and backing vocalists include Jenny Brown, Nel Staite and Sally Harvey," John said.

He said he's thankful for the assistance of these people, as well as those who worked on the website: his wife Aileen, Jason Tavener, Darren Roberts and Kylie and David Hanson.

Go to the site to hear the new track, as well as past recordings from this diverse musical talent.