

## &gt;&gt; Snapshot

Nicola Carless

Vocalist

Musicians' Union



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#### Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

Although I have been a solicitor for 20 years, I have always been involved with music. Initially I sang in choirs then performed with a number of bands over the years. Five years ago I bumped into the bass player from my first ever band and we decided to start working together again along with the guitarist (now my partner) he was working with.

Since then the band has undergone numerous evolutions from a cover band called ‘29 Ways’, which did fairly well playing locally. We then came across the music of Imelda May and Caro Emerald and, as we loved their work, we started to perform their songs under the name ‘Night Whispers’. This got a great reaction, and a recording of one of Imelda’s songs, called “Eternity”, was shared on line by Darrel Higham, who wrote the song, saying he was honoured to watch such a great version.

We have been doing well over the last few years performing and we are now writing our own songs. It is incredibly important to us that we control how these sound, so we have set up our own home studio. We will be releasing our first original album soon when the band name will become “Love Tattoo”. This is a very exciting time for us and I’m loving every minute.

#### What do you like most about your work?

I am so confident and comfortable being on stage performing. Everything else disappears for me. I’ve been told that it is obvious to everyone else that I am having a great time up there, and I think that rubs off on the audience.

#### What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

For me, it’s getting bookings for work and staying on top of all of the administration. It takes a lot of effort to put packages together and make the band stand out when there is so much competition. Our work has so far been

largely local so we are working hard to expand our horizons. However, it’s a real challenge because equipment is so expensive and it takes so much time to run your social media well and keep our website up to date.

#### Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

The FEU Training workshops (Run a successful media campaign and Mobile video kick-starter) have really helped me learn how to use social media effectively. We want to promote our new album on our own, so we need to stay on top of this.

I’ve learnt how to build my own website and, of course, we had to learn about acoustics to set up our home studio. Next thing I need to get my head round is finance, so I will be checking out the FEU Training online resources until I can attend the workshop on this.

#### What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

Time and money are the biggest issues, which is why the FEU Training workshops are such a great asset.



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**How has what you've learnt helped with your work?**

The social media day really drilled home the importance of building an online community and that you need to involve people not just transmit. The video day was also brilliant. Getting tips on how to make a decent video from your mobile device when you are on a low budget was invaluable. It means we can do nice little videos to promote our work on social media.

Attending the workshops has really changed how I use social media and I wouldn't have attempted to make my own videos with my phone before the kick-starter workshop. I've learnt so many worthwhile tips and strategies.

I highly recommend the FEU Training workshops and other attendees I spoke to at the workshops talked very highly of other workshops I'd not attended.

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*"It really helps that they are free, but the quality is excellent too. I see these sessions as a real benefit of joining the MU. It's a great environment to learn. I met so many lovely people over the two days and gained a lot from them too"*  
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**What has encouraged you to attend FEU training sessions?**

It really helps that they are free, but the quality is excellent too. I see these sessions as a real benefit of joining the MU. It's a great environment to learn. I met so many lovely people over the two days and gained a lot from them too. I came away from both workshops feeling optimistic and like I'd had a real boost.

**Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creative?**

No.

