

bella rae

VALUE + BEAUTY + PURPOSE



THE UNMATERIAL GIRL | SISTAS BEFORE MISTAS | CAREER SNAPSHOTS
BEARDED LADIES | SUMMER SWIMWEAR | SEAFOOD SPECTACULAR

jo davie

This girl and her guitar are going places. The 20-year-old, folk, pop singer from Brisbane spins stories into songs. She sings in a gypsy jazz band called Cigány Weaver, teaches piano to primary schoolers, runs for fun and has a chocolate Labrador called Max.

I remember the moment I knew I had to pursue music. I had finished school and started a creative arts and education degree and I was hating it. I was in my room playing guitar and the thought came to me, quiet but clear – “I think I just want to be a musician” – and I got butterflies. I knew deep down that is what I really wanted but I was scared because I knew it was going to be hard. I felt the fear and did it anyway!

My family have been so supportive – especially my dad. I love him! He made sure I had an excellent education but never tried to push me into any particular career path. I think he’s proud of what I’m doing.

My first gig was busking outside a bakery. The opportunity came through a friend, as it often does. I was so nervous but I had worked hard to be ready and I got through it. You have to really back yourself, which is a struggle sometimes! Now I am gigging all the time between the gypsy jazz band and my solo performances.

These days, if I’m nervous before a show, I give myself a pep talk and say something like – “Jo, you’re really good, and these people are lucky to be here listening to you” – and it does help!

Studying at a music university has been incredible! It is wonderful to be surrounded by people who are passionate about the same thing as you.

The musician lifestyle can be very unpredictable. I like to set goals and plan towards them but with music there are quiet days where you don’t feel like you’re progressing. I have learned to take my rest when I can because the next minute I might have to play back-to-back gigs.

Creativity often bubbles up in the quiet times. I can’t write a song unless I’m calm, which is why I haven’t written one in while, what with final uni assessments!

If you want to be a musician, you treat your music with the respect you would any other job. You need the appropriate training, otherwise you can get hurt. In my second year of uni I was doing so much singing, busking and rehearsing I started to strain my voice. It became painful to sing. I couldn’t get through a rehearsal without it hurting. I thought my life was over! I thought, “I won’t be able to sing! What I am I going to do? I don’t have any other qualifications!” I got a specialist to check my vocal chords and saw a speech pathologist to help me figure out what I was doing wrong. It was just technique. I learnt and adjusted and my voice is better for it.

Last year I tried to record an EP and got a band together but because I wasn’t quite clear on my sound and what I wanted, the result was not what I’d hoped. It was a terrific learning experience though! Since then I have been narrowing down my style and finding my influences. Some of my favourite musos are Joni Mitchell (I can thank Dad for that), Fleet Foxes, Laura Marling, Bon Iver and The Paper Kites.

I am trying to focus on my solo stuff again now. I am working with a friend who has helped me refresh my old songs. I hope to release a single in early 2017 and work towards an EP. I want to make it something I am proud of and something people will like. It’s for people after all. People like you!

To keep an ear out for new tunes (or to book a gypsy band for your next event!) find Jo at www.jodavie.com







slugs and snails and puppy dogs tails...

... are NOT what boys are made of! We love the guys in our lives and thought they deserved a little celebrating.

LIZ ISAAC ON DADS, FRIENDS AND BROTHERS

Guys often get painted as jerks, fools or creeps, but this hasn't been my experience! Guys enrich my life greatly! They offer a sense of protection whilst empowering me to grow stronger. They balance my perspective and ground me. I am grateful to have them around.

When I was a mere strap of a kid, my Dad did public speaking. He would often ask for my opinion and get feedback from me. Me, an 8-year-old girl, giving him, a 30-something-year-old man, feedback on his work! He sure as heck didn't need my thoughts, but he listened and considered what I said as though I were his equal. Occasionally I was there when he delivered his talks and would hear the ideas I'd given him woven throughout.

I remember a lot of time spent riding shotgun in the car whilst Dad drove. We'd listen to the hourly news on the radio.

When the newsreader finished up, Dad would turn the radio down and ask what I thought about what we'd heard. Then, after I'd spoken, he'd pitch in and explain things in more depth. Now as an adult, looking back, I respect him deeply for listening to a child with all sincerity, for taking on board what I had to say and allowing me a voice.

One night, many years later, I was out grabbing a bite with some mates. I was sitting chatting with one friend when a slightly intoxicated man began hitting on me fiercely. I wasn't at all keen, so I moved to join a bigger group of my friends. The drunk guy followed and began invading my personal space. One of my observant friends, Sean, who trained in martial arts, noticed what was going on, so he came to my aid. The drunk guy was not impressed and he tried to fight but Sean put a quick end to that idea and neither man was seriously hurt. Crisis averted!

But my confidence was shaken by this whole experience – I realised how defenceless I was. A few days later Sean called to say he'd organised for me to have private self-defence lessons with a female instructor. Those lessons helped restore a sense of power to me. I appreciate him for what he did – for keeping an eye out for me, being willing to get in a fight on my behalf and for turning something that scared me into a catalyst for empowerment.

One autumn day a few years ago, on my folk's land, my kid brother and I were fixing a gate that some crafty sheep had figured out how to open. As we worked, we discussed a difficult circumstance we were facing as a family. I was sad and feeling pretty hopeless about it.

He, however, had a sense of hope and great ideas about how we could move through the problem. He was tackling something head on, with maturity and



thoughtfulness. He brought a totally different perspective and gave me a sense that all would be well. I was struck with an overwhelming sense of respect for my little brother – for his level head and for his ability to bring calm to me.

HANNAH LAWES ON HER FRIENDS WHO ARE BOYS

Guy friends! Where would we be without them? Don't get me wrong, I love my girl friends just as much but, growing up, I found it easier to hang with the lads. My primary school phase of hardcore tomboy ended in many poor attempts at friendship with the male species, often greeted with a football to the gut or a face full of mud! But as I travelled through school I found myself much more relaxed in the company of my guy friends than that of many girls.

One thing I value in particular is a guy's ability to forgive and forget, whereas I've often felt girls tend to bear grudges. I

can also be guilty of this but, with guys, somehow their intriguing minds blank out after a moment or two and there's no recollection of a hurtful deed.

I also really like how accepting my guy friends are and how easily our relationships can be maintained without the need for quick replies, snapstreaks or 'likes for likes'. I have found many guys don't like exclusive cliques or ganging up to get back at someone. This is something I really respect them for. So, though they work in very different ways, if you are looking for an accepting, loyal and trustworthy friend, don't rule out a guy.

VIOLET BURGESS ON HER BOYFRIEND

I am head over heels and smitten as can be with my boyfriend! Three great things about him:

- his presence – it's just so warm and uplifting no matter the situation. If I'm

- sad I can just look at him and his hazel brown eyes and feel safe.
- his smile – the way it lights up my world and is so contagious, I can't stop smiling around him!
- he accepts me for me – despite my sometimes negative attitude towards myself. He makes me feel so loved and happy, he is my shining light when it's dark and my sunshine on the cloudy days!

Do you have a guy in your life you want to celebrate? We'd love to hear about him! Write to us! Tell him too! He'd probably love to know you appreciate him.

Not everybody is lucky enough to have such brilliant guys in their life. Some men do cause a lot of pain. If the men in your life are letting you down or hurting you, we hope these stories might let you know that there are great guys out there, you can hope for better, ask for help, talk to someone safe, break free and seek something more.



what floats your boat?

Growing up, I had numerous ideas about what I wanted to try my hand at. Sometimes it takes a few goes to figure out what you're good at and what you enjoy.

Firstly, I fancied myself as a jazz ballet performer and signed up for classes. Only problem was, I'm not the most coordinated person!

Next came my musical aspirations and singing lessons (OK, I could at least hold a decent tune) followed by the purchase of a second-hand guitar and learning the basics of this fine instrument. I even tried my hand at writing a few songs.

Then I had the sudden urge to pursue my dream of becoming a famous actress on television. *Why not?* I had the entire world at my feet. Before long I was enrolled in a television acting course one night a week and it seemed that my career would soon be launched into the stratosphere. In actual fact I did find an agent and spent a few years earning pocket money as an extra on television programs – before realising I didn't really want to be an actress after all!

I had many varied passions and interests while I was growing up and each one contributed to the person I am today. (I can still play a tune on my guitar if called upon!)

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, WITH A BREAK FROM SCHOOL AND NORMAL ROUTINE, YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF WITH SOME EXTRA TIME ON YOUR HANDS. SO HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YOU...

What would you like to try if you knew you couldn't fail?

Take a moment to dream and really think about what you would be interested in, what skill would you like to learn, what would you like to try?

Now grab your journal and write down some possibilities – anything at all that comes to mind.

If you're drawing a blank I encourage you to also ask people who know you what they see as your strengths and talents. They might see something you don't.

So many of us don't try new things for the very common fear of failure.

You may think:

What if I'm not good at it?

What if it turns out I actually don't enjoy doing it?

What if my friends and family think it's a silly idea?

That's a lot of 'what ifs!'

But here's another question for you to consider...

What if you find that you love it?

What if you find your passion?



Every single one of us is unique, amazing and original.

And you can't possibly know the things that will truly ignite that spark within you – unless you at least give it a try.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER...

Not all of us are lucky enough to have parents who back us in all the things we'd like to try and classes can be expensive! You can't expect your folks to fork out every time you think you want to explore a new hobby. It might be good to talk to them about a possible budget for lessons and classes, which will show them you want to take responsibility and work with them to explore your potential passions. They know you pretty well after all!

'SHOOT FOR THE MOON. EVEN IF YOU MISS, YOU'LL STILL LAND AMONG THE STARS!'

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

I love this quote. It reminds me I don't have to aim for perfection. Even just attempting new things and challenging myself to try new situations is, in itself, an achievement.

HERE'S ANOTHER QUESTION FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT...

If you had an entire week dedicated to anything you wanted to try, learn or create – what might that be?

You see, I didn't discover I enjoyed writing until way into my adult years. In fact, for ten years I didn't attempt writing my first book because I was afraid I might fail. I didn't know if I even had any talent for writing and – the big one – what would others think of me?

Nowadays, if I am given the freedom and space to work on my passion, you'll find me in the corner of a coffee shop, or sitting by the beach, notebook in hand, writing my heart out.

SO MY CHALLENGE TO YOU IS THIS – TRY NEW THINGS!

Take a chance. Join that dance class, try your hand at writing, try out a new sport, learn to sew, make jewellery, start a blog, start your own business, create poetry, try acting, singing, climbing, bushwalking, painting, creating. Yes, you may find it's not for you, or maybe you won't be the very best at it. But you'll never discover the things that truly ignite your spark, unless you first try.

While it is exciting to try new things, it is important set yourself up for good habits down the track – to learn to commit, follow through and stick things out. So if you decide you want to give something a crack, think about committing to it for at least one year. Getting good enough at something to enjoy takes time.

ENJOY THE JOURNEY!



the unmaterial girl

Introducing our cover girl and fashion writer (with a difference) – Leah Musch! She spills the beans on how she went from being a fast fashion addict to a slow fashion activist.

I have loved fashion since I was a kid. I went through a lot of phases – testing out various styles to reflect different parts of my personality. I don't take it too seriously and try to have fun with what I wear.

When I was 21 I opened my own clothing store in West End, Brisbane, called *The Happy Cabin*. I ran that store for three years until I burnt myself out working six days a week. It was a big operation to run by myself. So I sold the business and had a little bit of profit I wanted to invest in an experience that might help me figure out what to do next.

I then found an organisation called *Social Starters*, which works to connect young entrepreneurs like myself with others in developing countries. I signed up, headed off to Rio, Brazil and spent two months working with a talented young entrepreneur who had started her own fashion label. The experience opened my eyes to the idea that we already have so much around us to work with; we don't need to create new stuff all the time.

It often makes more sense, is less wasteful and more cost-effective to reinvent or refresh what we already have, than to buy something brand new.

When I got back from Brazil I watched a documentary called *The True Cost* and it completely shattered me – in a good way! It fired something up in me and set me off in this new direction, which has changed the way I look at fashion and life in general.

Let me break down what I learnt for you:

FAST FASHION IS:

low-quality clothing that is churned out, following fleeting trends, made to be worn once or twice then tossed, mainly for the purpose of making money. Fast fashion has little regard for the wellbeing of the people making the clothes or the impact on our planet.

SLOW FASHION IS:

the opposite of that monster! Slow fashion is sustainable (considerate of environmental impact) and ethical (considerate of the people behind the products). Think high-quality handmade pieces meant to last. Slow fashion is caring for what you have and investing in clothes that might cost more but will last longer. Second-hand shopping falls into this category too.

With this shift in thinking I became determined to de-clutter my life! I sold about 80% of what I owned (which was a lot) and lived off that money for about a year. I went for six months without buying anything new, which wasn't hard at the time because I was feeling so empowered.

Now I live by the philosophy –

'She who travels lightest travels furthest'.

The less I have the less I feel weighed down – mentally and emotionally. It feels great! I am honing in on my style and I am not afraid to wear the same things multiple times. You can still do a lot with a small wardrobe – mix and match!

It is easy to get caught up in a cycle of wanting new things in order to be complimented and admired. It can

become addictive, I know, I was one of the worst offenders! I still have to catch myself sometimes. I think if you can pull away from that, shift your perspective and begin to feel great in who you are and what you wear without needing those compliments all the time, you will feel freer.

Sometimes it is challenging! Fast fashion designs are still beautiful and eye-catching and they can still inspire you. It's about being perfect or denying yourself the fun of fashion.

It's about considering the impact of your choices a little more.

And I'm not into judging people who shop fast or tearing people down for their choices, I'm simply being true to what I believe.

Now I study fashion and am starting to make my own clothes – and that is just so thrilling! There's this fantastic pride in wearing something you've made yourself. You know about every stitch and seam and the quality and time it took and you appreciate it so much more than if you'd simply bought a cheap piece from a fast fashion store. It has a story. I feel like a proud mum when I make something because even when it's not perfect I just love it anyway. It's more individual and you won't find anyone wearing the same as you!

Leah has a blog that documents her sustainable and ethical fashion adventures and discoveries. Check it out - www.unmaterialgirl.com

Follow Leah on Instagram – [@unmaterialgirl](https://www.instagram.com/unmaterialgirl)

Striped Top and Flower Pants by Aussie brand The Fifth Label purchased from The Happy Cabin
Bird Dress found at the Wardrobe Warriors Market for \$5 | White Dress found at a thrift store in West End for \$8

What animal are you?

Find out which animal's characteristics you share! For each question, circle the letter that most applies to you.

YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN A GROUP ASSIGNMENT. DO YOU:

- A. take charge of the whole group?
- B. try to get to know the others and befriend them before getting down to work?
- C. immediately analyse the assignment requirements?
- D. find it hard to make any of the decisions but also carefully avoid confrontation?

YOU ARE HANGING WITH THE SQUAD IN THE SHOPPING CENTRE. WHICH ACTIVITY WOULD YOU PREFER?

- A. competing with your friends to find the best bargains of the day
- B. sitting chatting in the coffee shop
- C. planning out the whole day and following the schedule
- D. you don't really mind – what everyone else decides is OK with you

YOUR NETBALL TEAM HAS BEEN DEFEATED A COUPLE OF TIMES. YOUR SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT IS:

- A. more practices every week where every member must attend
- B. a whole new approach to the opposition with some risky strategies thrown in
- C. to go over the video of the last game and see in detail where the strengths and weaknesses are of each team member
- D. to keep practising the routine strategies for goal shooting, attack and defence

YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT SOME LOCAL REFUGEES WHO ARE IN GREAT FINANCIAL NEED. TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THEM:

- A. you organise a concert at lunchtime
- B. you give an inspirational talk about their situation
- C. you research the details and provide a list of their exact requirements
- D. you write a story about one of them that will touch people's hearts

YOUR FRIEND HAS HURT HER ANKLE BADLY AND HAS TO GET UP SOME STAIRS TO CLASS!

- A. you encourage her to persist with her crutches
- B. you come up with the idea that she could sit on a skate board while you pull her round the long way to class
- C. you remember another time when this happened and get the same strong friend to give her a piggy back up the stairs
- D. you are mainly interested in keeping her calm and peaceful, whatever the strategy!

Now, don't put yourself in a box, but look for tendencies in yourself. We're not stuck as one animal for life, we always have room to expand our personalities. Once you have worked out your strongest personality type, think about your friends and their characteristics. Enjoy the differences!

Inspired by Dr Gary Smalley
- counsellor, author, speaker



Lioness MOSTLY A

You are bold and confident; you like being in authority and taking charge; you are competitive and action oriented, persistent and a problem solver; you are goal driven, self reliant and independent.



Otter MOSTLY B

You are friendly, mix easily and are very verbal; you are inspirational, have creative new ideas and are prepared to take risks; you are fun-loving, energetic and optimistic; you enjoy change, variety and spontaneity.



Beaver MOSTLY C

You are analytical and practical; you like being detailed and factual; you are orderly and controlled, consistent and scheduled; you are a perfectionist, conscientious and discerning; you enjoy instruction and are persistent and deliberate.



Golden Retriever MOSTLY D

You are sensitive and sympathetic, calm and even-keeled; you are indecisive, patient and tolerant, avoiding confrontation; you are thoughtful, warm, relational and a good listener; you enjoy routine, dislike change and are non-demanding.

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you're seeing and reading...

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