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UT educators had impact on BZ Lewis



BZ Lewis, musical composer, producer, engineer and UT alumnus, returned to his alma mater Tuesday to speak to students about the music industry and how he got there. Lewis, class of '92, started Studio 132 in California four years after graduating and has since become an established commercial artist, recognized guitarist and voting member for the Grammys.

Photo Credit: [Tamir Kalifa \(/author/tamir-kalifa\)](/author/tamir-kalifa) | Daily Texan Staff

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Success is built by maintaining friendships and connections and finding the right niche market to cater to, said musician, producer and UT alumnus BZ Lewis (<http://www.studio132.com/staff.html>).

During a Tuesday lecture titled “Hope it’s cold — you’ll wear a lot of hats,” Lewis focused on the ways students can work to achieve success in the music industry as he has.

The event was a part of the Music Leadership Lecture Series hosted by the Butler School of Music (<http://www.music.utexas.edu/>).

Lewis, who graduated in 1992 with a bachelor’s degree in music, describes his experience in the business as a convoluted series of events bringing him to where he is now.

He said he recalls bumping into a man holding an armful of blank manuscript paper in college and as he helped pick it up, took it as a sign he had paper to fill and music to write.

Lewis said he credits his continuance in music to his professor Adam Holzman for creating a guitar program at UT.

“If he didn’t do that, I don’t know if I would’ve done music here,” Lewis said. “[Holzman] had a massive impact. I had other theory teachers and music related classes, but your principle instrument teacher is just the rock that you constantly are seeing the whole time.”

Now a five-time Emmy award winner for various works of music, Lewis said he currently works producing bands of all genres, owns a music studio in Oakland, Calif., creates music for television and film and does work for big name companies such as Google.

“I like having varied stuff happening,” Lewis said. “If I had to do one thing all the time, I think it’d sort of drive me nuts.”

Left to his own devices, Lewis said he creates heavy industrial music that appears to be “Nine Inch Nails meets Crystal Method and has Rob Zombie as their bastard child.”

“[Aside from that] I also do intelligent, poppy, folky music for jobs where I take an idea and turn it into a tangible sonic reality,” Lewis said.

As parting advice for students and musicians, Lewis cautions students to be wary of contracts and to make sure currently recorded music sounds professional. He told students not to overcomplicate their music and to be good people to get along with.

Lewis gives good insight into showing that musicians can capitalize off their work, said business senior Benson Thottiyil.

“If a knucklehead like myself can fake my way through this stuff, then hopefully they can, too,” Lewis said.

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