



## Meet Ryder Owen: Wellington High School's Emerging Hip-Hop Talent

At just 17 years old, Ryder Owen is already making waves in Wellington High School's creative community. A senior student with a growing passion for producing and rapping, Ryder is constantly honing his craft. "Kia ora, my name is Ryder Owen, and I'm just a year 12 high school student at the moment, but I like to do music, you know," he introduces himself humbly, though his dedication tells a much larger story.

Surprisingly, Ryder didn't necessarily start his journey with a love of music. In fact, he admits, "I used to really hate music when I was little." It wasn't until a friend got him into it that his perspective changed, leading him to experiment and create. "We just started to make it, I guess—create our own stuff," he recalls. Over the years, his voice and skills have matured and evolved too. "It was really bad back then," Ryder laughs, "but you've got to start somewhere."

His creative process is driven by consistency. "If I not working on a song, I feel stink" he confesses with a grin. His weekly routine often begins with finding a beat on YouTube before he dives into lyric writing, usually at home. "Mostly it's just me in my room, but I also started writing bars in class when I finished my work." For production, Ryder uses a website called Band Map, continuously refining his skills. "I think I produce two to three tracks every week, just getting better at using the app."

Ryder's sound isn't just about beats and rhymes—it's also about cultural connection. As a young Māori artist, he's started weaving Māori language into his lyrics. "I try to use some Māori kōwhiri in my writing," he shares. This cultural exploration is a growing part of his identity as a musician, as he balances experimenting with his voice and letting his Kiwi accent shine through. "I'm influenced by groups like At Peace, who do this old-school G-Funk type rap. That's my forte," he says, emphasising the importance of keeping his sound authentic and culturally grounded.



The path hasn't been without its challenges. Ryder opens up about the ups and downs of sharing his work online, particularly on platforms like TikTok. "There's always people there to hate," he admits, though he tries to take it in stride. "Human nature is amusing to me, so it's kind of funny in a way, but sometimes it gets to you."

Despite the noise, Ryder is keeping his head up and his ambitions high. He's recently been approached by Zeal, a creative youth organisation, to record in a professional studio. "I'm pretty keen for that," he says. In addition, he's considering a university course in lyric writing to further expand his skill set.



*Looking ahead to his final year at Wellington High, Ryder has exciting plans. "I've got this close mate in my photography class who wants maybe create videos for my music" he shares, hinting at a move into the visual side of his art.*

*As for his long-term aspirations, Ryder is ready to keep evolving, both as an artist and an individual. His journey may have had humble beginnings, but with his relentless creativity and a bit of Aotearoa flair, the Wellington High community has no doubt that Ryder Owen is one to watch.*

***Ryder releases his self-produced tracks on Soundcloud under the name Mistah\_Skuxx***