

A Music Dream Comes True



Straalen McCallum's music dream
came true – find out how he did it!

Sharon Parsons



A MUSIC Dream Comes True



Dear Reader

I met Straalen McCallum on Australia Day 2011, just hours before he was due to perform at a concert. He sang three songs from his first album followed by Australia's national anthem. The temperature was 43 °C but he performed with grace and professionalism. After the show, I asked him what he needed and he replied with a smile:

“

SOME WATER AND CHOCOLATE!

”

My sincere thanks to the following people for their time, information, images and enthusiasm for this book:

Straalen McCallum and his family, Gold Coast, Australia

Steve and Kerry White, Sydney, Australia

The team at Sony Music Entertainment Australia, Sydney, Australia

Venetta Fields, Gold Coast, Australia

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That day, Straalen showed me his special presentation that he wrote to inspire other children to achieve their dreams. Follow “Straalen’s Keys to Success” on pages 30–31 and I’m sure you will find inspiration to achieve your dreams, too.

I hope you enjoy reading about Straalen McCallum as much as I enjoyed writing about his exciting start in the music business.

Sharon Parsons



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1

Straalen Sings in Sydney

For teachers' inspection ONLY

It's Australia Day, 2011, in Sydney, Australia, and thousands of people line the shore of a large lake at sunset. The crowd faces the stage from many vantage points and people wonder who the next act will be. The announcer's voice silences the crowd when she says, "Please welcome to the stage the youngest singer ever to be signed by Sony Music in Australia – Straalen McCallum!"

The spotlights beam onto the 13-year-old performer who signed his first ever music recording contract six months ago. Since then, his life has been on fast forward, with song recordings and singing performances all around Australia.

STRAALEN IN DUTCH

Straalen is Dutch for "sunbeams".



Sydney





What Happens When a Boy's Voice Breaks?

From about the age of 13, a boy's voice can "break" or change. This can happen over a period of weeks or months from soprano (a high voice) through alto to tenor (highest men's voice), baritone or even bass. Boys can continue singing during this time.



Q: SO HOW DOES A YOUNG SINGER GET THE ATTENTION OF A HUGE MUSIC COMPANY?

A: In Straalen McCallum's case, he performed for nine years in as many places as possible until one day a music producer heard his voice and said, "Hey, this boy can really sing!"



2

Straalen Surfs, Skateboards and Plays Sports

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Straalen and his family live on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia.

The family consists of Straalen's parents, two brothers and many pets, including a dog called Mantooth. When the waves are ideal for surfing, Straalen and his brothers grab their surfboards and walk down to the nearby beach.



Straalen enjoys family holidays!

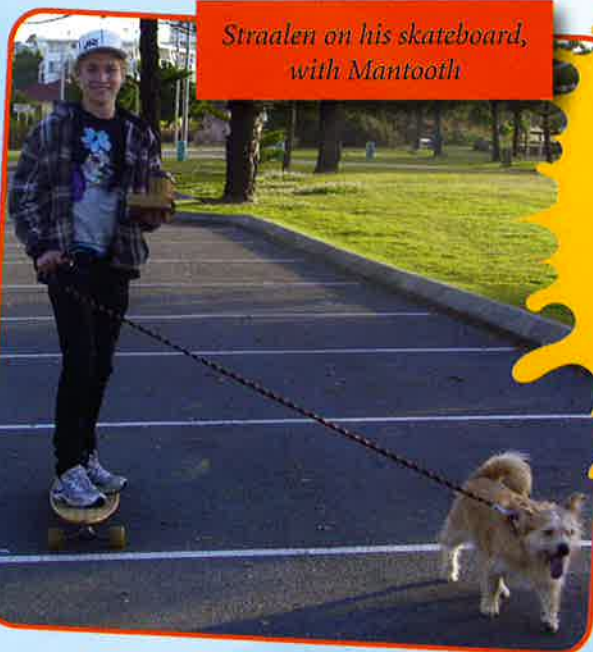


Straalen Loves Sports

Although Straalen enjoys and excels at many sports, he also knows that it's important for vocalists to keep fit and healthy. At primary school, Straalen was the captain of the rugby team, and in his last season he scored 58 tries.

I asked, "Since you have become more famous, how are you treated on the rugby field?" Straalen answers, "Well, nothing much has changed except I probably get tackled a bit harder, just for fun!"

Straalen on his skateboard, with Mantooth



For teachers' inspection ONLY



Straalen surfs at his local beach on the Gold Coast.



Straalen even does media interviews at the beach!

3

Straalen's Dream



My dream is to sing for large audiences around the country and the world.

Straalen McCallum started singing at the age of three. He sang along to his parents' records because he loved the music. He learnt the songs off by heart – the lyrics, the melodies and the music. At kindergarten, his teachers asked him to sing all the songs he had learnt because they loved them, too. As Straalen says, "The teachers loved my songs but the kids didn't know what the heck I was singing as they weren't exactly the Wiggles's songs!"



A three-year-old Straalen performs at his first gig!

Start Dreaming

By the time Straalen was six, he knew he wanted to be a professional singer. His dream was to sing for large audiences around the country and the world. He knew that it would be very hard to achieve that dream, so to keep focused he decided to do two main things.

First, Straalen made a vision board for his bedroom wall. He chose pictures and words to inspire him, and keep him focussed on his dream.



Practise, Practise, Practise

The second thing he did was to practise a lot. Straalen practised singing every day around the house. This was easy for him because he loves music and feels a connection with the songs he chooses to sing.

Straalen's bedroom became his singing studio. He still sings every morning from 5.30 am to 6.30 am and after school, too.

Straalen's Neighbours

One of Straalen's neighbours is an elderly lady who hears him practising every morning at 5.30 am, so when he skateboards past her house, she calls out things like, "Hey Straalen, I liked your new song!"

Singing in School Performances

At school, Straalen was treated just like any other kid except when it came to school concerts. Word spread quickly that Straalen had a powerful and melodic voice. He says, "I was never treated any differently at all, except that I got all the singing roles. I was never a tree in the school play, unless it sang!"



Straalen loves singing along with string instruments.

“

YOU CAN'T GET THERE
UNLESS YOU PUT IN THE HARD
WORK.

STRAALEN MCCALLUM

”



Straalen sings at a pre-school gig in the role of Hercules in Hercules the Musical.