

Back to the future

Can a P.E.I. small business cash in on a vinyl revival?

A Charlottetown startup is looking to take advantage of a renaissance in records.

Kaneshii Vinyl Press Ltd. is launching this fall in P.E.I.'s capital hoping to tap into growing demand for vinyl records. Buzzangle's 2017 mid-year Canada music consumption report found vinyl record sales were up 4.8 per cent over 2016 year-to-date, and vinyl accounted for 3.4 per cent of all physical album sales, up from 2.6 per cent 2016 year-to-date.

Kaneshii Vinyl is co-owned by Gideon Banahene and Ghislaine Cormier. It will be Atlantic Canada's first vinyl pressing plant and will focus on Atlantic Canadian, Franco-Canadian and Eastern U.S. markets. Both Banahene and Cormier are music fans and after researching the state of the vinyl record industry, they found production wasn't meeting demand. "I could never play an instrument or sing, so this



What once was old is new again: Gideon Banahene and Ghislaine Cormier opened a 3,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility (Kaneshii Vinyl Press in Charlottetown), in response to growing demand for vinyl records.

was the best way for me to break into the industry," Banahene says with a chuckle. "Demand for vinyl is going up but there are not a lot of production companies coming up."

The partners have a 3,000-square foot production facility and an automated pressing machine that

can crank out 180 records per hour and 1.5 million per year. They managed to secure some government funding to help launch the business—a \$175,000 repayable contribution from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the P.E.I. government is chipping in approximately \$39,000 to help with equipment purchases, rental costs and marketing.

Cormier says they had already secured several orders from clients ahead of their fall launch. However, their success will not only depend on the company producing quality vinyl but on fickle artists and consumers continuing to yearn for records. Banahene, for one, thinks vinyl is here to stay.

"The artists can make more money on vinyl and for fans, buying vinyl has become more like an experience. You have to listen to a whole album, there's the art work on it and you get to experience the artist's body of work," he says.

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