

Why I make time to... Play in a chambers band

Law Rocks has become a force of nature and Keating Chambers has managed to field a group of fully fledged musicians spearheaded by an extraordinarily talented (and modest) frontman

DEMOLITION >> Clockwise from left: Oliver Goldsmith (drums), Calum Lamont (lead vocals), Ben Sareen (bass), Sarah Williams (keyboard, vocals), Marcus Taverner QC (lead guitar), Tom Coulson (guitar), Maddy Ilsley (bass, vocals).



Some say playing in a chambers band is an antidote to the daily grind; a stress release; or a chance to be creative when all around you seems to consist only of liquidated damages and interminable defects claims. There are certainly times during rehearsals when voices are raised (sans microphones) and tantrums abound. But for all of us, the satisfaction of coming together and putting on a show against the backdrop of different (and conflicting) diaries is immense.

Many Counsel readers will by now have heard of Law Rocks (see left). Over the last ten years, it has become a force of nature. The charity was set up in 2009 by the then senior clerk of Keating Chambers, Nick Child. Nick's enthusiasm, supported by Marcus Taverner QC and other members of Chambers, led to the birth of a Keating band. 'Demolition' played at the inaugural London event, so if you would like to see what the now Head of Chambers looked like with a bit more hair, have a search around on YouTube.

The band promptly split thereafter, among rumours of musical differences... A brief revival ensued in 2012, with the addition of fresh blood from the younger ranks of Chambers, but Demolition then remained dormant for five years before reforming in 2017 for its third appearance in London. For the first time, Keating was able to field a group of fully-fledged musicians, without ringers, spearheaded by an extraordinarily talented (and modest) frontman.

A banging set again in the 100 Club (supported by a strong cohort of barristers, clients, family members and crowd-surfing clerks) saw Keating take first prize and, with it, an invitation to the IBA in Rome the following year. Having been robbed by the Italian judges at that event, following impressive performances from the other bands, Keating returned again to London in November 2018 for 'Six of the Best', and on a night of ACDC, spandex and bunny ears, romped home again as winners.

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Spending weekends rehearsing together and travelling to Rome to perform generates a sense of camaraderie in an unusual set of circumstances that is not forgotten upon returning to the day job. Overall, the experience was a truly rare opportunity to bring all of the strands of chambers together: QCs, juniors, clerks, and marketing staff were all involved, and the sense of achievement in turning up more than compensated for the angst over the potential for humiliation

As a set of chambers, the show was a great leveller which brought everyone closer together. We are lucky, in this profession, to have a collegiate working environment, and anything which promotes and sustains that is something to be treasured.

LawRocks always welcomes new bands, particularly from chambers. The next offerings will be at London International Disputes Week in May and the tenth anniversary celebration in June, where Keating will take to the stage again. Barristers are traditionally somewhat underrepresented at the competitions, as solicitors' firms (with their larger pools of talent, of course) tend to dominate the line-ups. It would be good if that could change. We would encourage you to get involved: lawrocks.org (<http://lawrocks.org>).

You won't sound as good as Demolition did, though.

Calum Lamont (Keating Chambers) is a pre-eminent junior in global construction and engineering litigation and in international arbitrations involving construction and infrastructure disputes, particularly in Korea, Hong Kong and the Gulf.

Givers not takers

The tag line 'Rock Globally, Give Locally' sums up Law Rocks' mission, which has seen almost US\$4 million gifted to local organisations ranging from support for homeless children to food banks. From relatively modest beginnings in the 100 Club on Oxford Street, the enterprise has grown exponentially and lawyers all over the globe now compete regularly for bragging rights at various venues, large and small. In addition to frequent gigs in the UK, Middle East, Far East and America, Law Rocks! has an annual 'slot' on the Thursday night of the International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference. Long may it continue: lawrocks.org (<http://lawrocks.org>)



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