

# Eksteen Jacobsz chats Sick Leaves

 By [Ilva Pieterse](#)

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I caught up with The Sick Leaves front man Eksteen Jacobsz last week to chat about the new album; what's in store for 2010; playing live, and the process of song writing. Here is what he had to say.



## **How has the third album “Last Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy” been received since its launch last week?**

The media has been good to us and we have received some good comments on our Facebook and MySpace pages. Many of them are saying how different it is from the previous albums, as we knew they would, but feedback has been positive.

## **What is the story behind the name of the album?**

I read it in a book a while ago, the name stuck with me, and I really wanted to tie it in with the album. In this context, a “fairy” is something very dear to you in your life and you need to realise it can be taken away from you at any time. Be sure to look after your “fairies” and nurture them.

## **What is your favourite song on the album?**

My favourite is “Run Away”. As a song, it is the one that is best tied-together. Lyrically, it is unique and says a lot. Musically, it is the best of three albums in terms of chord progressions. Also, it was one of the easier to put together.

## **What is your favourite part about performing live?**

I love the energy and immediacy that comes with live performances. In studio, a song only comes out about three to four months later and then you still have to sit back and wait for feedback. It is best to play songs live first before taking them to the studio. When you play live there is a lot of excitement that you can feed off. Also, from being on the road, you can meet new people, and see new places.

## **What is one of the strangest things that has ever happened to you on stage?**

There are always ridiculous things happening. For example, I once almost lit a stage on fire in Mossel Bay. We also had the bassist lose his spectacles on stage once, and the look on his face was classic.

## **Has it always been your dream to be a musician?**

When I was kid, I always liked music and having it around me. I only took up guitar and started to play in high school at the

age of 17, though, which is quite late compared to most. It pretty soon became more than a hobby, so I went to London to check out the scene over there. From the beginning I loved writing songs and I had written hundreds before I started The Sick Leaves in 2005.

## What is the best part about being a musician?

The best part for me is writing new songs - seeing where they are going, developing them, and coming out with the complete song. Although you never know when a song is finished. A year or two will pass after recording and you'll think "why didn't do this?", but that always happens as you gain more experience. The trick is to leave it once it is recorded. You can sometimes modify it live, but just for experimental reasons. All you can do is to work really hard at it - once you find you are going in circles and not moving forward, it is a good indication to stop.

## Do you write songs alone, with mates, or with your band?

I prefer to do solo song writing. It is a different process when you write songs with others - it is a compromise. I have tried it in the past, and I find it is a much quicker process when writing alone. It gets harder the more people there are. Some bands are lucky, though, they find a formula and write songs according to that.

## What advice would you give someone starting out in the industry?

Firstly, learn how to play an instrument and be as good as you can be on it. Secondly, surround yourself with the right people - realise that whatever it is you are gonna do, you cannot do it alone. One very important thing to keep in mind - probably the most important - is to get a manager or an agent to promote you. Remember, you should be focusing on the music. And, finally, don't do half a job. You need to go into this with everything you can. Stay committed and don't just do half a job.

## What is your strategy for the next six months?

My primary aim is to push the new album. We're playing Splashy Fen on 1 April and will be doing a whole bunch more live performances this year. I am also thinking about going overseas - most probably England. I feel The Sick Leaves' sound would work in England rather than in a diverse country like America, so I'm are going to aim there for now.

## Where can readers find out more about The Sick Leaves?

<http://www.myspace.com/thesickleaves>

[twitter.com/thesickleaves](http://twitter.com/thesickleaves)

<http://www.facebook.com/thesickleaves>

Photographs by Schalk Groenewald [www.pawz.co.za](http://www.pawz.co.za)

## ABOUT ILVA PIETERSE

Ilva Pieterse has been involved in the media industry for over 13 years. During this time, she has written for and been involved in many online and print publications across a wide variety of industries, but mainly focusing on the IT sector. Examples of her creative work can be found at [www.consciencefiction.com](http://www.consciencefiction.com)

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