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Singers And Bands – The Artist Showcase

By Tom Gauger

After attending countless artist showcases through the years as a former talent booking agent with

the William Morris Agency, I've decided to touch on some practical ideas that will help promote your artist career and give you an increased chance at a possible record deal. After exploring much of the information available online, I determined to stay with easily grasped concepts and ideas that would help artists avoid some of the common mistakes.

First let's make it clear that not every act deserves an artist showcase, at least not in the light of pandering to record labels in an ongoing campaign to secure a record deal. If you've read any of my articles, you know I try to tell it like it is and so once again, I will not shy away from the truth that not every artist deserves an outlet to showcase their "talent." The reason is not simply because the band is no good, but because maybe there is not a maturity or serious quality from the members or a definitive goal in place that everyone is rallying around. Other reasons may include lack of a unique playing quality or an act that is simply playing cover tunes. Let's talk about cover tunes for a minute.

Don't play cover tunes unless they are specifically asked for, or unless you are a cover band playing wedding gigs, etc. If you are truly looking to get a record deal, then showcase your own music. This notion that your audience can relate to you and your band simply because you are playing music that everyone knows is false and misguided logic. Would you have cared, the first time you heard one of your favorite groups, that you knew any of the material - I bet not. You were so into the music and groove you wanted to hear more and buy the record. You think of big groups today that at one point were nobody, and just imagine hearing them for the first time, would it have mattered? - I bet I'm right again. Moral of the story, play your own music.

Before you begin to look at the possibility of a showcase, look at your objectives. Each showcase doesn't necessarily have to be about the record deal, but that should certainly be your ultimate objective and therefore, everything that you bring to the table ought to encompass and revolve around that goal. For example, you might showcase a particular groove and set of songs, which you would like to take out on the track and test. Is the audience really digging it or is it not you. Likewise, you can showcase for a lesser goal, but yet an important stepping stone to a record deal signing like pushing upcoming events or visibility to obtain additional bookings, etc.

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As you start planning a showcase, who will attend? - Friends or will music industry personnel be present? Each artist showcase ought to be driven by a marketing approach. Do you have an artist logo, professional bios, pictures and press kits made? These can not be a "friend of the group did it for us," looking press kits. They have to shine and look pro like music industry individuals are already in play and are looking at your act. Don't overlook these elements. You might check out artist press kits, bios and press blurb writing at ReelMusician.com.

How will you go about promoting your showcase? You have to look beyond stapling flyers to telephone polls, etc. Have you thought about creating a jingle or station ID or local radio personality piece for free in hopes that you will get some radio and TV exposure? You ought to look at local radio stations and write a mix according to the style of the station and your band - see if you can't get some promotion that way. Cable TV advertising is fairly inexpensive. You might consider going in with everyone in the band and buying some advertising from cable or local TV stations.

If you don't already have it, and I'm sure most do, get your web site up and going and make sure that you have a page for upcoming events along with pictures, bio, contact page. Websites do not have to be expensive. You can get your website hosted for \$5 – \$10 a month. You most likely won't get a lot of traffic, but you will get credibility with the public and within the music industry crowd - This will prove to be invaluable later on down the road.

What will your showcase consist of and what can you do to stand out from the crowd? Your act needs to look like they've been at this for years with a comfort level exuding from who the band is. How long is the showcase? You've heard the old expression, always leave the crowd wanting to hear more. Far better to do a rather short showcase with knock out tunes than a lengthy, drawn out, can't wait to get out of there, gig. Work with your song lineup and tweak the number and length of your set at rehearsal until it feels right. Have everything figured right up front. Who's going to speak when and try to hit all of the "what ifs," as much as you can. You want this showcase to "wow" the listeners and create some momentum and energy.

Re–think your image and make sure that it matches who you are. People are not that stupid and can almost immediately recognize when an image is forced and manipulated and not natural to the group. Better to have a natural image, true to who you are, than an image that you think just has to go with your style of music.

In closing, make each and every showcase count, with calculated marketing and a thought through line–up so when the music industry execs start showing up, they have something to go back to the office with!

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In addition, Free e–books "The Jingle Singer's Guide," and "Secrets To Great Song Demos," may be downloaded at

<http://www.ReelMusician.com>

Wedding Plans: How Do You Choose The Entertainment?

By Luca Salamone

As with anything else, wedding entertainment is a minefield. There are thousands of Wedding DJ's, Bands, magicians and Singer's alike out there, waiting, eagerly to take your money for a service that could be either fantastic, or not so good. The key is this: THOROUGH RESEARCH!

With this particular product, you can't always see what you are buying until you have actually bought it. You can't easily see the full product range as there are so many types out there. And when you've finally found something you like, can you have it? And will it be reliable enough to show for the biggest day of your life?

Here are a few simple measures you must take when researching and booking your wedding entertainment:

Use the Internet: You will find some of the largest directories for entertainers this way. Browse various websites for Bands and Singers. Use various search methods and phrases such as "London Wedding Singer" or "Wedding entertainment in Liverpool", paying attention to sponsored ads that highlight your chosen phrases.

Take your pick! Once you've found something you like the look of you'll want to find as much information on this service as you can, even before the contact stage. For example if it's a band, do they have online demos? Images? Testimonials? You want to be at least semi–sure before you hand over an email address. Narrow it down to say, your favourite 5 bands, before you start any contact.

Obtain a quote and Availability: Money is always an option for most of us! I wouldn't want to spend half of my wedding budget on a band or singer, no matter how good they are, so I'd be on the look out for realistic pricing. You don't want to book someone who is overly expensive, but you also don't want to pay £200 for a singer who will tell you "yeah, I'll sing for you and I'm also a DJ!" When you first contact the entertainer(s), you would first enquire about availability for the date in question, then a price. Also how long will your entertainer perform for? Performance times can vary, though most singers and bands perform for 1 or 2 x 45 minute sets, depending on their pricing structure.

More information: If you can, get more information about their service. Can you visit them live? Do they have more demos? A repertoire? It is always good to meet up and discuss things in person, this way you'll get a feel for who they are and what they do.

Singers And Bands – The Artist Showcase

Book and Secure This of course is the most crucial part. Most Bands/ Singers will take a deposit/ booking fee (anything up to 50% is normal), so you must be completely sure of your choice at this stage. It is always wise to obtain an invoice, receipt and most importantly a contract of agreement.

This way you can be 99% sure that they WILL be turning up on the day and if they don't, you have the necessary means to be compensated in full.

By this stage you are well on your way to having an unforgettable evening. You can then use the remaining time before your wedding day to liaise with the DJ/ singer(s)/ Band etc. giving them your first dance, requests, schedule and any other information they may require.

Organising wedding entertainment can be very stressful, even on the day, but if you make the right choices early and are prepared to research and book in advance, you will save yourself and your partner at least one set of Wedding worries.

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Biography: Luca is a

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