

Welcome to Ty Cohen's Get Amplified Music Industry Success Newsletter!!

This Week's Issue: Four tips to have a safe and happy new year while you play. Also we'll look at keeping yourself healthy and musical and finding new sources to sell your CD's On-Line. Our Spotlight On this week features Valerie Jay and the Americanos, a group with an English front-woman recording and touring in Northern California.

FOUR TIPS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

New Years Eve is called 'amateur night' and not without reason. People often over indulge in drinking who normally don't. Although even the most experienced drinkers have impaired judgment, it seems the less experienced drinkers lack good sense even more. Mix that all up with higher of numbers of people in a club and...well...you can imagine.

So you've got a gig that night and will be playing 'Auld Lang Syne' at midnight. What do you do to protect yourself from people that can't handle the extra spirits?

- 1) Know the staff and the club. As soon as you get there learn everyone's names and what they do. That way if there's a problem you'll know who you're talking to. Also check all the exits so you know how to get out quick if need be.
- 2) Spotting potential trouble. If you see someone who might get out of hand at some point during the evening let the manager or bouncer know in advance so they can keep watch too.
- 3) Don't insight fighting. It's best to leave the moshing to another day of the year when there's less people and less drinking going on.
- 4) Don't play with the elements. Unless you're a professional (and by that it means you've been well trained for years in pyrotechnics and such) don't do it. If a problem happens you could have a stampede on your hands resulting in injury or death. That's not a way to bring in the New Year.

The trick to a safe New Year bash is to be extra aware of your surroundings and whom you're playing for that night. Much of this might seem like 'common sense' but be a bit more attentive than usual so you get 2005 off to a great start.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN? NO WAY!

If you're a guitarist or a pianist with pain in your fingers, wrists, arms, back, or neck that refuses to go away you could be suffering from such conditions as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Bursitis or even Trigger Finger. Although CTS is known with computer overuse any occupation that lends itself to repetitive movement of the fingers and wrists can experience these syndromes. No pain, no gain is not the correct approach for an athlete OR a musician. Your condition will only get worse before it gets better. So if you have any of these symptoms it's important you stop playing and seek medical attention.

However, if you have yet to experience these problems consider if you are doing the following to keep yourself 'in shape'. Much like an athlete, there's a right and wrong way for musicians to play and practice.

- What other activities do you do? If you start to have problems it might not be related to your musical playing at all. Perhaps it's computer use or another hobby. Evaluate all you do if you start to have pain.
- Are you warming up? You can't run the mile without stretching. The same is true when you're a musician. If you'll have a five-hour gig is 5 minutes enough time to warm up enough? No, it's not, so be sure to stretch those joints and muscles just as you would if you were a track and field star.
- Are you listening to your body? Have you begun to experience pain but have shrugged it off? Then stop ignoring and start listening. You might think you can't 'afford' to stop playing but the truth is you can't afford not to. Be sure you don't overdo it and make certain to pace yourself, at gigs and practices. Everyone, no matter their age, has physical limits. Stopping if you've had too much is not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of intelligence.
- How are you playing? Take note of how you're playing during gigs and practice. Look for bad technique, poor posture, or too much force. Don't stay in a fixed, tense position and make sure you keep your body centered as much as you can. That means no leaning more on one foot, leaning over or back too much, pressing strings too hard, etc.
- Have you checked your instrument? Sometimes we play 'harder' because there's something physically wrong with the instrument or it just doesn't fit you size wise. A double fretted guitar might look cool in a metal rock video but playing with it all night (and even toting it around in a case for that matter) can be tough and even damaging. So make sure your instrument 'fits' you and it's in working order.
- Are you taking a time out? Even if it's just a few minutes to stretch, it helps. And by stretch that means everything – fingers, joints, back, arms, etc. Remember that CTS comes about because of repetitive motion so take time out to move your muscles and joints a different way to relieve that pressure.

The most important thing to remember is that if you are having pain then seek the advice of a doctor or physical therapist. Pain is the body's way of telling you that something is physically not right so don't put it off. The long-term damage could be disastrous to your career and worse...your over-all health.

ON-LINE CD SALES

While most people know of www.artistdirect.com and www.cdbaby.com there are other markets out there where you can sell your Indie music. One of the best places of course is your own site. It doesn't require a sign up fee and you make 100% of the profits. But in order to spread the word you can also try the following U.S., Canadian and Great Britain CD sales sites for Indie artists. Each site has their rules and terms so be sure to visit them directly for full details.

<http://milesOfMusic.com/> - Folk, bluegrass, alt, country, rock. Must submit for acceptance.

<http://www.localsonline.com/local.music> - All genres. Free sign up.

<http://www.cdstreet.com/> - All genres. Sign up cost is \$30 or less per product and 35% of each sale with buy down option of 20%.

<http://www.overhear.com/> - Ontario, Canada artists only. \$30 set up fee and \$5 per CD sale.

<http://www.action-records.co.uk> - U.K. based On-Line Indy store selling all genres.

<http://www.insound.com/> - Punk, underground, etc. Must submit for acceptance.

<http://www.planetcd.com/> - All genres. \$30 sign up.

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SPOTLIGHT ON...VALERIE JAY AND THE AMERICANOS

Valerie Jay was born and raised in Hull, in the county of Yorkshire, England. The youngest of five children, she felt musically inspired by her father, a gifted organist, to pick up the guitar at the age of fifteen. Jay founded and fronted her first band 'Skyline' and performed her original songs, she recalls an early music review describing her as "breezy pop."

Drawing influences from great country performers such as Patsy Cline, Emmy Lou Harris, Linda Ronstadt and k.d. Lang, inevitably, six piece country-rock band 'Head Over Heels' emerged - and fast became the hottest band on the country circuit, playing festivals and country music clubs all over England, "Valerie has a great country voice- quite haunting", a remark frequently echoed.

In 2001 Jay moved her home base to San Francisco and founded 'Valerie Jay & The Americanos', a country based, roots-rockin' band that plays Jay's original songs next to classic Americana favorites with a California country edge. Audiences are thrilled to be basking in the beauty and depth of Jay's formidable voice, and share a mutual deep connection. "Valerie Jay is a country belter out of England - Emmylou, Linda Ronstadt, Bonnie Raitt - Jay's right in there mixing country and soul, her voice full of heartbreak and passion" -Ben Fong Torres.

Backed by the Americanos, an impressive line up of Bay Area talent, this band is constantly breaking new ground: Rob McCloskey on bass guitar, co-songwriter, McCloskey puts his own stamp on the band with innovative song arrangements; Jeff Hanson on pedal steel guitar adds his well honed inimitable sound; Ken Owen on drums keeps great feel with impeccable tempos and dynamics; Michael Roy Alderson on guitar and vocals, songwriter, Alderson effortlessly blends perfect harmonies and performs his original material with great conviction; David Kaffinetti on keyboards, songwriter, adds his own original flair with wonderful sensitivity evident from a colored musical background.

Valerie Jay spoke with Get Amplified and offered a little insight into the music biz and her life as an indie artist.

- When did you realize you wanted to be a musician? **From as far back as I can remember, I was singing along to records and singing to myself in the playground. It was just something I fell in love with, something I could do on my own.
- What's the most outrageous thing you've seen on tour? **Not being able to get served a drink at a working men's club in England simply because I was female - outrageous!
- What do you love and hate about the industry? **That the charts and radio are only a shop window of all the pure talent out there, but now the internet is bringing independent artists to the fore.
- What do you feel is your greatest strength musical and why (songwriting, guitar playing, etc.)? **Performing is always a thrill for me, I love connecting with the audience. I also love songwriting, breathing life into musical notes.

- Tell us something about your band the fans might find interesting but don't know:
**My keyboard player David Kaffinetti is Viv Savage from Spinal Tap!
- Hamburgers or Hot Dogs or Tofu? Which is best and why? **Cheese hamburger with fries and mayonnaise! Oh, and don't forget the coke - just a yummy quick fix!

Upcoming Tour Dates:

Saturday, January 15th
Sweetwater Saloon
Broadway
Redwood City, CA
9:00-12:00am Free Admission

Sunday, January 30th
The Makeout Room
3225 22nd Street
San Francisco, CA
Admission \$

For more information, check out their website at <http://www.valerie4music.com>.

117 Ways To Market, Promote And Sell Your Music Online provides you with precise marketing strategies and methods of operation that have been proven by independent musicians just like yourself! Are you ready to learn how to use the internet to skyrocket your music career? Then check it out at <http://www.musiccontracts101.com/docs/products/007/index.html>

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