

## So You Want to be a Star

*A five-part series about music and business and the music business. All persons and events are fictitious even if they are not. Names and events have been modified significantly to make them funnier. Or whatever.*

### Part 1: Big Ideas

The lights. Standing on stage looking at the sea of faces. Heart pounding. Terrified. Elated. Worried that I'll forget all the lyrics, even though I wrote them. That I'll trip over a cable. That my voice will crack. Having the best time in the whole world. That's *the high*

At least that's what I *think* it'll be like. I've never played to a large crowd. Well, maybe once, if you count Louis Wu's Birthday party (yeah, that was me in the "Tokyo with Mirrorshades" room, dressed as the cyberpunk Geisha) at Boskone 3. That was about 300 people or so.

I did feel *the high* once. *The high* is the feeling that you are exactly in the right place at the right time doing exactly what you were born to do. When you get *the high*, it shows. You glow with your inner light. You smile, and everyone watching you can see you are having an incredible time playing for them. *The high* is infectious. It leaks off of the stage and onto the audience.

I felt *the high* in a dive of a bar, in Bound Brook, New Jersey, but they had a stage, and we had a band, and we sounded pretty good, and we had a future. Or so I thought. I thought the four of us were friends. I thought we were a good writing team. I thought that two women fronting the band, one on guitar and one on keys was unique at the time; it was our hook, our in, our... wait a minute...

I guess I was too enthusiastic. Too happy. Too good. Roze Budd, the blonde guitarist, started dating the drummer. All of a sudden, they decided that the brunette with the cleavage (me) was excess baggage, and what have I done for the band this week, anyway? A secret booking and a phone call later, and I was on my own.

That's the lot of the female musician. Probably lots of male musicians, too, but I'm a fem, so I can only speak for myself. If you're a chick looking for a band or people to jam with, this is what you can expect when you answer ads in the local Rock tabloid:

"We're not looking for a girlfriend"

“Can you bring a nightgown to the audition?”

“Our girlfriends would never let us have a girl in the band because we’d all end up sleeping with her.”

“Are you willing to dance topless?”

It didn’t matter that I could play. It didn’t matter that I could sing. I felt frustrated and humiliated and somehow inadequate. You keep telling yourself that it’s “them” – “they” have the problem, not you. You have to keep on looking. And of course, I did. And from this, I learned

**Music Biz Rule Number 1: NEVER GIVE UP.**

I kept dreaming my dreams of *the high*. I kept writing songs. I collaborated with fine musicians and excellent guitarists. I dated bass players (that was a big mistake). I jammed every chance I got.

At the same time, I was exploring my spirituality. And I got my BIG IDEA. I had been told many times that I would be successful when I was working for things greater than myself; that if I was selfish I would fail. And I had many selfish failures. I was told that the more you want something, the more elusive it becomes; that when you stopped *wanting* it would just *come to you*. This is one of the hardest things to practice.

Think about it. You are alone, you crave companionship, you desire a lover. It consumes your thoughts, your actions. You are desperate. The desperation is visible for all to see. And anyone who would be your companion is scared off, or turned off, and they stay away. The only ones you meet are the sharks that feed on your desperation, taking your love, your time, your money, anything they can get their hands on.

Of course, this had happened to me, and eventually, I got burnt out and disgusted with the whole thing, and *I didn’t want a relationship*. And guess what happened. I met someone. And because I wasn’t desperate, because I wasn’t in need, it actually worked out. Amazing.

So back to my BIG IDEA. I was going to put a project together whose goal was *not* to get a record deal, was *not* to be the Next Big Thing. I put an ad in the music paper:

SACRED MUSIC FOR THE GODDESS. Wicca/Pagan band forming. Looking for guitar, bass, drums, strings, woodwinds, brass. Electric/eclectic, etc., etc., blah blah blah.

The idea was the Music. The idea was to Create, to Provoke, to Glorify the Sacred. Money didn't enter into it. The goal was to *Make some Music*. That was my BIG IDEA. I didn't care if we were popular. I didn't care if we became famous. I didn't care if we made a profit.

And I didn't have a name for the band. Sacred Music for the Goddess was what we were going to be doing. And then a drummer called about the ad, and thought that Music for the Goddess was the band's name. And a guitarist did the same. And I thought "*Why not? Music for the Goddess, so be it.*"

I saw my path stretching out before me. A glorious adventure awaited me. I adjusted the burdens that I always carry onto my back, and I started forth.

*Next time: Planting Seeds*

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