

M Online – Demo to Limo

One of the more famous proponents of net DIY is Sandi Thom. M caught up with her to learn about her experiences.

How long have you been writing and performing?

About 20 years! I had piano lessons when I was four but the serious business of gigging got underway when I was 14. I played keys in a band called The Residents.



What were your early influences?

My Dad used to play guitar and sing a bit and he introduced me to Dylan, Joni, Carole King etc. My Mum had Guitar Town by Steve Earle which I loved, also John Cougar Mellancamp.

When did you realise the net presented you with an opportunity to promote your music to a wider audience?

We did a gig last year in Edinburgh with a whole load of other bands which was webcast, and I just got blown away by the fact that there were more people watching than were in the room...like a TV show for unknown bands that was dead cheap. So the seed was sown, then it just took a while for my brain to engage and do something about it.

Who helped you formulate your net presence?

My best friend Lizzie, Marcus and Craig (the band) and my manager all mucked in once the lightbulb had gone on. We had a couple of great days, painting basements, drinking wine and getting a good sound through one web cam mic.

When did you first realise you were creating a buzz from your work on the net?

When I was told that 600 people had watched the first night... which blew me away since the biggest gig we had done on our own at that point was around 200.

Would you say it was the web or the publicity you achieved that surrounded your web work that got your breakthrough?

I think ultimately it became a combination of the two.. but I was reminded of how the first webcasts went all over the World when we played LA last week and nine people who had watched the first webcast came along and got some flyers signed.

How long before the record company came along?

About two weeks after we started we had a lot of labels come to Tooting and I signed with RCA a week after that.

Could you have got to where you are without the publicity you achieved via the net?

I have no idea... I would like to think so. I just think if you sing it from the heart and tell it like it is and you connect with people then however you do it ultimately you will connect with more and more people.

Have you stayed close to your community of net fans?

As much as I can. Things are a bit bonkers, but I have just started a weblog so people can see what I am up to.

Do you have advice for other PRS members about how they could go about using the net to 'do it yourself'?

Just believe in yourself, keep it simple surround yourself with good people and work your balls off! The net is built to be user friendly and all the advice you'll ever need is on there somewhere.

Have you seen much International activity through your efforts on the net?

I'm currently in the US where I don't think I am that well known although the gigs are busy. I think we have a lot of work to do..but it's great. We're definitely having folks turn up at gigs who saw the webcasts so we made an impact on them! We have had a hit in NZ, Oz and Eire and I am just heading off to France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Sandi, thank you for your time, we wish you every success.

Thank you very much love and light x