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Interview with Bonnie Gallanter

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Dylan Bliss is currently a Music Industry Studies major at University of the Pacific expected to graduate in 2024. She is mainly interested in tour management and live events, but ...[Read More](#)

This article was written as part of the curriculum for the Bachelor of Music in Music Management and the Bachelor of Science in Music Industry Studies at University of the Pacific. Each student conducted research based on his or her own areas of interest and study.

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Industry Profile: Event Producer, Bonnie Gallanter

By Dylan Bliss



Bonnie Gallanter, President of Muse Artist Management, is a talent manager, music consultant and event producer for high profile music, film, and television clients. Gallanter is currently the Director of the Women's International Music Network and Co-Producer of the She Rocks Awards, Events and Showcases. She Co-Produced CMJ Music Marathon, New York's largest and longest running music festival, for over 20 years as well as numerous festivals, events, panels and symposiums, trade shows, concerts, personal appearances and tours. As a manager, she has specialized in artist development, tour production and management, music development, film and commercial production, distribution, marketing and business strategies.

She currently manages an award-winning filmmaker, Jeremy Heslop, and Film Production Company, Valkyr Productions that produces long and short form documentary style films, narratives and commercial spots.

Former clients include teen pop artist Jesse McCartney, Disney's T Squad (Boo Boo Stewart), Deal or No Deal's Patricia Kara, songwriter and music producer Kevin Savigar (Rod Stewart, Cheetah Girls, Josh Gracin), The Broadway Kids (Ashley Tisdale, Jesse Eisenberg, Andrea Bowen, Christy Carlson Romano, Brandon Uranowitz, Jenna Ushkowitz, Jess LeProtto), Stefanie Scott (Disney's A.N.T. Farm, Wreck It Ralph, Insidious).

She is a member of ASCAP, NARAS, Film Independent and is on the Advisory Board of the Alliance for Women in Media SoCal and the Women's Advisory Council for Digital Hollywood.

What is your official job title?

I have several titles. I am the director of the Women's International Music Network, the producer of the She Rocks Awards, president of Muse Artist Management, a management company.

So what does a typical work day entail for you?

Every day is different. For the Women's International Music Network and the She Rocks Awards, I am responsible for producing the annual She Rocks Awards, showcases, panels, workshops, mentoring sessions. I work year-round on The She Rocks Awards booking the honorees, performers, production team, hiring and training the volunteers, develop sponsorships, solicit Silent Auction and Gift Bag items, and so on. I usually start working on it the day that I finish the last one. We did some virtual panels and showcases before, but everything pretty much was live events. Last year we pivoted and live streamed everything.

The She Rocks Awards, is an annual event honoring women in the music business, like music artists, women in music education, foundations, and music retailers. Artist managers, foundations leaders and more

For my film client and production company, I handle all business aspects, producing, client development, budgets, permitting and more.

That's what my days are like.

What are some aspects about your jobs that you love?

I really love producing events, productions, films, tours. I've been doing it for a really long time. It's always different. I feel it's like putting a puzzle together. There are so many different parts to it, and the ultimate outcome is that the puzzle fits.

Are any of these your dream jobs, or something that you aspired to be before you started to be in the music business?

Music has always been my passion. One of my first jobs out of school was volunteering to work on a music festival, the CMJ Music Marathon, a three day, 3 night festival in New York City. I originally volunteered, and then got hired the next year to handle a small part of it, and eventually I became a co-producer of the event. It grew to a five-day, five-night event where we booked five hundred panelists that spoke during the day and fifteen hundred artists that performed in around 90 venues all over New York City. Super challenging. We moved a lot each

year to a new daytime venue (Lincoln Center, NYU, New York Hilton) where our base would be for the daytime programming, so it was always challenging to learn a venue. That was an amazing experience! I think that maybe my dream job would be to develop and produce a new tour or festival. I like doing big, and I find it challenging, but super rewarding.

I love that you say how you started to volunteer and it became such a good training ground for you, because I feel like that's how most people learn -- by doing hands-on experiences.

Absolutely, and that's why we rely so much on our volunteers. I could not do the She Rocks Awards or any of my events without volunteers. And that's a whole process, you know. You have to find them, educate them and be able to rely on them. I also rely on interns as well. But I feel that, again, it really has to be an educational process for whoever is jumping on board, the volunteer or intern. It's really important for their education and it's also obviously really helpful for us. But if you're not learning something as a volunteer or as an intern, then what's the point of doing it?

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Right! That actually ties into one of the questions I have. Who are some of the people you typically work with, and about how many are on a team? For She Rocks, who are the typical people that you work with, and about how many are on your team?

Our team is basically Laura Whitmore, who founded the She Rocks Awards and the Women's International Music Network, and me. And then there's Myki Angeline, who handles social media and does many of our artist and talent interviews and podcasts as well as works on the event. She's incredibly talented. We form the base, I co-produce the event with Laura. Typically, I spend my entire year working on the She Rocks Awards, as well as the other events. We also have a wonderful advisory board, twenty individuals who are in the music business who serve on our board, we now meet virtually. They help us determine whom we should honor, perform and help with sponsor development. They give us ideas for other events and initiatives that we do during the course of the year.

For the She Rocks Awards, everyone else is brought in just before the event. We hire a great production company, Mix One Sound, which handles our live video and tech on site, a small team from the amazing Soundgirls for sound, lighting and production and then we bring on volunteers.

Fortunately, I have found a handful of amazing volunteers that have helped us every year. Christine Taunton (UOP alum), who has taught at UOP, and her husband, Dustin, have worked with me for five years. I couldn't do it without her, Christine basically developed a new ticketing program and streamlined our registration and attendee entrance process. There are a handful of volunteers that have worked with us for years that jump back in every year in a management capacity. And then I hire around one hundred volunteers for that event alone. They are from all over the world and I don't see most of them until the day of the event, so I have to assign roles and educate them online, over the phone, through emails and then usually the week of the event I have a handful of volunteers that will come in and help in advance. I had an amazing intern for several years, (Corrine Gomez), who was like my right arm and was really invaluable. It's a tiny core team and many volunteers.

I love hearing about the process of recruiting and training volunteers, and as you keep saying it's an educational process. That's important to hear as a student because that's what I strive for. I hope that wherever I end up, I will get similar educational opportunities and learn as much as I can.

Right! Exactly. I love working with interns and with volunteers, and I find that a lot of our volunteers and interns come back every year. It's helpful to me obviously because I don't have to train them over and over. I can just say "Okay you're going to be the talent coordinator, and here's your radio, here's the schedule," and they know what to do. And when they don't, it's a process, but most people tend to come back, which is amazing, and it takes a village to put together and run an event like this.

So what have some of your favorite events been so far that you have produced or been a part of?

Wow, that's a good question. The She Rocks Awards every year is so different, so I really, really love doing that. We have worked with and honored so many incredible people like Melissa Etheridge, Lisa Loeb, The B-52's, The Go-Go's, Suzi Quatro, Shirley Manson, Cindy Blackman Santana and so many more. I really enjoyed doing CMJ. Some of my favorite moments were some of the keynote speakers like David Bowie, Brian May, performances by David Byrne, Patti Smith, Barenaked Ladies. Some artists performed in really small venues before they were really big. We had a small team working on it and when it was over it was always like "Wow, look what we did." And it's amazing too, with She Rocks, to be able to spotlight these iconic artists,

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and also the myriad women who are the people behind those artists or the people who are in the business or have paved the way in so many different areas.

How do you feel like the She Rocks Awards has impacted women in the music business and aspiring music business professionals who are women?

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I think that the She Rocks Awards is probably the only event of its kind. There are a lot of events, the Grammys, or Billboard Awards, which focus primarily on music artists, but we like to shine a spotlight on women of all walks of life in the music business. And I think it's really inspirational to younger people to be able to see that there are so many careers in music outside of being an artist.

I remember when I sat in on the music industry forum class even before I decided to go to UOP, in the presentation you had a long list of jobs you could do in the music industry, and being a girl who was new to the music industry, I was surprised, "There's this many jobs in the music industry?" So, it was amazing to see that I can do literally anything.

Absolutely. I was very lucky. Personally, I've always worn many hats; I've always been a producer of events while I also had my own management company, and still do. I managed a kids' record label in my early career where I learned every aspect of the business, artist

management, music, videos, handling bookings and tour management, radio, distribution. Then I went on to manage and develop young talent. Helped secure record deals, did fan development, worked with songwriters and producers, booked their tours. That was during the very early stages of social media, which didn't really exist then as we know it now; back then we sent out postcards, so it was very different. Through it all, I have always really enjoyed managing artists and developing talent and being able to help them get to another place.

I'm actually not managing any music artists right now, but I've been managing a filmmaker who I met while clearing music for a documentary that he did. I've been managing him ever since.

So a little bit of everything, right? Have you ever faced any challenges when you are producing an event?

I would say the pandemic really made everything very challenging. We had a lot of live events that were scheduled for 2020 and had to cancel and then bring everything online. We were really fortunate that we were able to do the She Rocks Awards in January 2020 live and it was, after all the years of doing it, felt like it was the best live event we've ever done. And then all of a sudden pandemic, so you can't do that anymore. Having to plan The She Rocks Awards for 2021 changed everything. I learned a lot in 2020 about technology, virtual performances, and putting together an event virtually. We started doing weekly virtual showcases in April 2020. Learning how to do that if you're only doing it once a week, was very challenging.

And then putting together the She Rocks Awards for 2021 was a completely different animal because we had to pre-tape everything. We had to book the Honorees and get them to commit to pre-tape their acceptance speeches and performances. We were fortunate to get a lot of our sponsors to come back and support us. And we also learned a lot because we did a virtual press conference in October which resulted in probably five times as much press and attention on the event than we've ever gotten before, so I've learned that I will always do that no matter if we're live or hybrid or virtual. We also did a virtual red carpet and a pre-show. We had to secure multiple streaming partners so that we could really get it out there. I would say that was probably the most challenging and now that I've done it I'd love to do it again. I did, over the course of last year, also do sort of a hybrid event and learned a lot about that too. Not as easy. It's really

hard to do live and then virtual and put it all together because you're relying on technology and you just don't know how it's going to go.

Yeah, working during the pandemic has been a learning process for everyone. But it is kind of cool to see that everyone is learning and figuring out new things.

Right! We did a red carpet event where a host interviewed each of the honorees and hosts and we pre-taped it on zoom. Some of the interviews - they were supposed to be three minutes - went almost an hour. We spent almost an hour with The Go-Go's, Cherie Currie and Nancy Wilson. We edited everything into a one hour show and we were able to release longer individual red carpet interviews as well.

For me it was really wonderful to be able to get to know our honorees way better than I ever would when I book them and then have them at the event, because at the event I'm moving around the whole time. I think that we will continue to do a virtual red carpet as well as a live red carpet if we have a live event. There is so much more that you can capture from the honorees that people want to know about. So again, there are so many different things we've learned this year.

It's great to hear that you landed an hour long interview with people that were supposed to be on camera for three minutes. You would never be able to do that type of thing live!

We will definitely do that again. It's wonderful. John Stapleton, who is a senior MAC Cosmetics artist hosted and did a really wonderful job of interviewing everyone. He was very consistent and knows and has worked with many of our artists like The Go-Go's and Margaret Cho. They felt really comfortable, and he had some great insight, so he was able to ask really pointed questions. [See various 2021 She Rocks Awards interviews [on YouTube by clicking here.](#)]

That's something you can't get at an actual red carpet just because everything's so hectic and unpredictable. I have one more question, so what inspired you to produce the She Rocks Awards?

About six years ago, I was introduced to Laura Whitmore, who founded the She Rocks Awards and the Women's International Music Network. When I met her I had attended the She Rocks Awards a few times and was always so impressed with it. I always thought "I'd love to work on this event," and when I met her I was producing an Awards Gala for the Alliance for Women in Media. We just really hit it off and I think about a month after that she brought me on board and I never looked back. It's been an amazing ride and she's amazing to work with, and it's such a great, inspirational event and organization. I'm excited to say that we're currently producing the tenth annual She Rocks Awards for 2022.

That's so exciting . . .

Yes, really exciting. I've been with it for about half that time and it's just grown. I know when Laura started it there were 200 people at a breakfast and it's grown to about 1,000 attendees. We honor around 14 or 15 women in music each year. We have performances, wonderful sponsors, and we've been hosting it at the House of Blues in Anaheim during the January NAMM show. We do have the date scheduled already, it's January 21, 2022.

That's awesome!

Yes! We've already started working on sponsorships, honorees, performances, and different ways to pivot with it. Since it's our Tenth Anniversary, we want to do something extraordinary. We are still contemplating whether it will be a live or hybrid event.

It's cool that you first attended the She Rocks Awards, and then you thought it would be great to work on it, and now here you are, co-producing it. That's inspiring!

Yes, it's been a wonderful experience.

Thank you so much, Bonnie, for all your insights! It was great to talk with you!

Thank you, Dylan!