

Angela's Artist Advice

Angela Marie Eidenmiller is the ISSA Associate Director of Artist Relations. Over the past few years many of our Award Winning Artists have benefited from Angela's sage advice.

The True Flex: The Grind in full Imposter syndrome.

We talk a massive amount about the grind in this industry. We constantly dissect the ever-changing algorithms, the non-existent budgets, the exhausting social media funnels, and the relentless hustle it takes just to get a single track noticed. But if we are being completely, brutally honest with ourselves, the most toxic adversity we will ever face doesn't come from a dismissive playlist curator, a cold gatekeeper, or a bad review. It lives entirely between our own ears.

For independent musicians, imposter syndrome isn't just a fleeting moment of self-doubt. It is a quiet, devastating career killer. It's that persistent, nasty little voice whispering that your talent is just a fluke, your recent wins were just dumb luck, and it's only a matter of time before the entire industry finds out you're a total fraud. You know the vibe—you hit a milestone and instantly think, "Great, now everyone is going to realize I'm just winging it." When you are operating as your own manager, booking agent, PR team, investor, and occasional therapist, letting that mindset take the wheel is a dangerous roadblock. It paralyzes you. It's the reason you hesitate to send that pitch email, freeze up in front of the camera, or hold back from making a crucial connection.

And let me let you in on a little secret: it doesn't just happen to artists. Even I, as a promoter, struggle with imposter syndrome. There are days where that voice creeps into my head too, trying to tell me I haven't earned my place. But as a professional promoter, let me tell you where the real magic happens: it's the true grit of the grind. There is an absolute, intoxicating power in creating something massive out of a whole lot of nothing.

When you have a corporate budget, you can just throw money at a wall until something sticks. That's not promotion; that's just buying noise. But when you are working on an absolute nothing budget? That is where the real grit comes alive, because you can't buy your way out of a corner. You have to out-think, out-hustle, and out-maneuver everyone else in the room. Operating on a shoestring forces you into pure, unfiltered creativity. It strips away the fluff and leaves you with the raw essentials: strategy, hustle, and genuine human connection. When you pull off a win with zero dollars in the bank, that is the ultimate flex. It proves that your strategy and your music are so undeniably good that the industry had no choice but to pay attention.

But you cannot build that kind of momentum if you are fighting the battle in isolation, drowning in your own head.

This is exactly why being an ***ISSA member*** is the ultimate advantage. When your brain tells you to quit and go buy a corporate cubicle, this global family acts as your mental shield. ***ISSA*** peers are there to lift you up, validate your hustle, and remind you exactly who the hell you are.

This is how we collectively pave new paths for independent musicians in an industry that wasn't originally built for us to win on our own terms. This is the very core of Tamanie Dove's vision and purpose. She didn't build this association to be a stuffy country club; she built it to be a sanctuary, a powerhouse, and a vehicle for independent creators to find their voice and their collective strength without needing a corporate green light.

Because I believe in this movement so deeply, I make it a priority to give back constantly. I advocate for this family every single day, and I am consistently dragging my own professional connections, artists, and industry peers into the ISSA circle—sometimes kicking and screaming, but always for their own good. We don't just network here; we look out for each other's mental game and clear the road for one another.

We have to change the narrative together. Stop giving luck all the credit: Luck didn't write your songs, and luck didn't build your momentum. You did. Own your wins, and let your ISSA family celebrate them with you.

Ditch perfection for real connection: Your audience isn't looking for a flawless, sterile, corporate-packaged pop star who never sweats. They want the grit. They want the truth. They want raw, real connection—and perfection is boring anyway.

Lean into the discomfort: Feeling like an imposter just means you are pushing past your comfort zone into new territory. Growth is supposed to feel uncomfortable. It means your talent is outgrowing your old headspace. *Send an email with the word "Imposter" to issasongwriters.todd@gmail.com and you'll receive a free Summit Raffle Ticket.*

This business will always find new hurdles to throw at us, but we cannot afford to be our own worst enemy—and we don't have to navigate it alone. Stop second-guessing your right to be here. Lean into this community, bring your connections into the fold, own your unique talent, claim your space with authority, and keep pushing forward. You earned your seat at this table, so pull up a chair.

Be real. Be loud. Keep creating!
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