



Sarah Gallenberger

Music Development Director, Banshee Music

by CAROLINE HORN

There are spine-tingling moments in most great sports games, and part of what creates the excitement for both the fans and the players is the music echoing across the field or stadium. But who creates and selects that music? Sarah Gallenberger is one of the savvy professionals putting together those live sports soundtracks. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a degree in anthropology, Gallenberger—who not only plays acoustic and electric guitar but also hand-paints guitars in her spare time—got an introduction to the music business when she spent five years planning events and marketing campaigns for Cream City Music, a musical instrument store in Milwaukee. While supervising trade shows for Cream City, she remembered the importance of networking and got to know some people who worked at the music publisher Banshee Music. When the time was right, she was able to reap the benefits of those relationships and got a job at the publisher. Gallenberger has now been at Banshee for two years, translating clients' needs into entertaining, energizing music programs with a special focus on music for sports teams and events. She took time out of her busy schedule to talk with *Music Alive!* about her interesting work.



that's a little bit aggressive. Usually for baseball we look for something that's family-friendly with more of an Americana or folk-music feel.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC TO PRESENT TO A SPORTS TEAM?

The people representing the team will tell us a lot about their fans and about their local culture. They'll tell us the target age demographic and the style of music they like. For example, with the Falcons, their fans not only love rock music but gospel as well. That's the only sports team that asked us to incorporate gospel into their music—but we did it!

MA!: WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

SG: I work with all of our songwriters. I call them and let them know what new projects are coming up, based on the clients who have signed on. Let's say the Atlanta Falcons are looking for music: I'll call all the writers who I know would be the right fit, and then I'll have them start putting together song ideas. I'll then share those ideas with everybody on the team here, we'll review the songs, give the writers feedback, and then put together a compilation CD for that team or client. I communicate with the songwriters during all stages of the project.

WHAT SPECIAL QUALITIES DOES MUSIC FOR SPORTS NEED TO HAVE?

It has to be high energy, it has to get people excited, and it has to have a really strong hook. It also needs a call to action, like "stomp your feet," "clap your hands," or "everybody scream"—something that inspires people to get up and move.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MUSIC THAT WOULD WORK FOR A FOOTBALL TEAM AND WHAT WOULD WORK FOR BASEBALL?

Yes, football tends to be a little edgier. We look for hard rock music—something

WHAT SKILLS DO YOU USE THE MOST FOR YOUR JOB?

Being an open, warm, and friendly person. Being able to listen to a song one time and recognize if the structure is developed, if the production is professional, and if the song has potential. Knowing how to determine if music will resonate for people.

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

Having to be critical of someone's music or to tell a songwriter that the music isn't right for the project.

WHAT'S THE MOST FUN ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

Being able to listen to music when it comes in, hearing it for the first time. You know the writer is so excited to share it with you, and then you get to share it with the team. Also, we get to travel and go to a lot of live shows to check out musicians and songwriters.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO STUDENTS WHO WANT TO CREATE MUSIC FOR SPORTS EVENTS?

Make sure the music has a lot of energy in it. Also, learn as much as you can about music production. Submitting a finished track is worth a lot; if you're submitting a rough recording, it's not going to get nearly as much attention as something that sounds professional. 🎧