

# Steve Ball

The know how in performing arts education

A member of the  
Musician's Union



Playing longer than he will admit but turned pro 10 yrs ago

## Steve's job involves:

playing the double bass, playing R&B, R&R, Jump Jive, Swing, Blues and a little Jazz at times. I am a founder member of the rhythm & Blues outfit OCEANS SEVEN and *Laura B and the Moonlighters* playing to dance audiences all over the U.K. and Europe.

I also take on regular dep work on the Rock & Roll scene and the pub circuit in and around Kent & Essex on both double & electric bass having taken the stage with such luminaries as The Comets, Wee Willie Harris, Garry Brooker (Procal Harem), Mike Sanchez (The Big Town Playboys), Buster Blood Vessel (Bad Manners), The Honeys, Nick Low and a number of other side men from bands such as The Pirates, Screaming Lord Such, the Dammed., Jools Holland & Dexy's Midnight Runners

### You must have...

A professional attitude  
*[you gotta take care of business]*

A business card in your pocket at all times

Good Communication Skills

### And you need to :

Be a team player  
*[keep your ego in your back pocket!]*

Be reliable

Always give 120%

## Musician

### How long did it take you to be recognised for your work?

I started playing in bands like most people during my spare time and evenings and would take any work that was on offer as a dep, this helped to get my playing up to scratch in many different styles and develop a reputation for being reliable, versatile and easy to work with, I guess that took about a couple of years.

### What is your latest project?

Finishing the new Oceans Seven CD  
(will be able to get it via the web site at [www. Oceans7.co.uk](http://www.Oceans7.co.uk))

#### Most recent gig:

The Brecon Jazz festival with *Oceans Seven*,  
The 100 Club with *Laura B and the Moonlighters*

### What was your first job?

I played in small bands for the love of it, working hard with little financial return but my first real payer was 1984, I did a live audition in a working mans club in Wimbledon, London, I played the whole evening and was incredibly nervous as I only knew half of the set. I never got the job but I did get £35 for my troubles

### How much can you expect to earn now?

As a musician it will vary from gig to gig with my two main bands but dep work can range from £50 to £100 a gig

**Be brave enough to  
take a chance  
and maybe make  
a mistake**

I'm a member of the Musician's Union. Lucky for me I have never needed to call on them but I know of people who have and they really try to look after their members in a very complex industry. Check out the web site it's not all about just paying subs, you get a lot in return too.

### What was your training?

L.M.S Diploma in

Bass Study

*at the Musicians Institute, London*

City & Guilds in Sound Engineering

*at the Institute of Music Technology, London*

N.V.Q. Level 4 Music Performance

*at the London Music School*

### Have you ever had to do another job, just to pay the bills?

Yes, I teach bass in secondary schools.

### Steve's highlight...

2004 new years eve, playing an open air gig in Senigallia, Italy in front of two to three thousand people and having to count down the New Year on stage



When people book a band they think they own them for the night and can treat them however they want to

I HATE AUDITIONS! OK. You will never do more auditions than when you are first starting out as a player and they can be hellish and too many bands will take you on just because you play a named instrument (Fender, Gibson) and your ability is a secondary consideration. I once auditioned for a band in South London, I had been playing a couple of years and could afford a custom made bass guitar and a good size rig, my audition was that good that the player due in after me left before I finished. They said that they would be in touch in a couple of days so I waited for the call, when it came I was offered the Job but only if I would fork out a lot of money for a Hofner Bass as they felt that their music was very Beatle like and wanted that kind of image (never mind the sound!) I turned it down.

### Do you have an agent?

I don't have an agent as the best way to get good work is by word of mouth and being seen. The bands sometimes use agents and they tend to build in their % to the overall fee usually around 10 to 15%. Some are good and some not so good. Remember that an agent makes a living from a number of acts on his books not just you, so if you go with an agent try and find two or three good ones to be with at the same time that will give you more chance of more work.

### What are your working hours?

Teaching is day work only  
Playing can be long and late hours and most of the time is spent travelling to and from the gigs.

### How does this impact on your life?

People want to go out to a good gig at the weekend and get wasted, the players are the ones working the gigs whilst the others drink their faces off so unless you have the all forgiving partner from heaven long term relationships are rare.

### Do you have to be away from home for long periods of time?

The most I go away for now is a week at a time it works for me.



### ADVICE

You have to make your own luck and learn to see an opportunity.

Life experience is always a good thing to have so if you have to hold down a regular job until you can get your career off the ground remember that it is a means to an end.

Keep your equipment in good order and ready to