

HOW TO KEEP YOUR BASS PLAYER HAPPY

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"A bassist is a failed guitarist."
 "Bass is easy."
 "You'll never get married if you play the bass."

These are all words etched into a bass players mind. At some point in their lives, the humble hero will go through some serious self-loathing and under the right circumstances will decide to fiddle with their cousin's acoustic guitar before finally becoming an accountant. However, it is very much possible to keep your bass players motivated and happy with the following statements.

"DUDE, BASS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT INSTRUMENT."

This will lift any bass player's day. Always remind him of this, no matter how true you think it is; he will instantly play ten times better. This is because a bass player is a conflicted creature. He is always walking a fine line between the motivational energy gathered from his funk collection and the perpetual thought of being unheard. You have to tap into that former feeling and hope that he will catch a bit of it.

"DUDE, LET'S JAM SOME RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS."

If you notice your bass player wallowing in a corner, feeling uncomfortable and everything then start playing "Can't Stop". He will instantly spring back into life with his rendition of the song. This applies with all of his favourite bands, meaning you have to pick up some Primus songs so good luck.

"DUDE, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO PLAY THE BASS."

The bass player is generally the most nervous bug in any band. So if you want to open him up, just get him to teach you the way of the bass even if you've actually never had any interest in picking up the bass.

"DUDE, SIMPLE IS GOOD."

There will come a time when your bass player is going to grow some major wings and try to fly. Unfortunately, this phase entails that he will be all over the place, improvising licks out of tune and out of time. This is where you stop him. But make sure to not make him feel like he's playing the most ungodly thing you've ever heard. Specify the fact that bass is all about groove and nothing else. This will get him to take a step back and play what the song needs and not what he needs.

"DUDE, BASS PLAYERS ARE SILENT BUT DEADLY."

So here's a scenario, you're recording your first song and the bass player starts complaining about how he can't hear himself in the song. It's understandable, the bass is supposed to be in the background but all your bassist cares about is whether his school friends can hear that sick triplet in the third bar of the first chorus. He will try and get you to increase his volume in the mix but you know that it will throw the entire song off kilter. This is when you reassure him that he's heard and he's respected even though the aforementioned triplet is actually off beat.

"DUDE, THE BAND'S A BUS AND YOU'RE THE BUS DRIVER."

You receive a phone call. It's your bass player at the crack of dawn. He sounds sad; he doesn't want to play



bass anymore. His university admissions start next week. He was the fourth person you convinced to learn bass for your band. How many more can you convince? You can't give up on him. You tell him to perhaps take some space, think things through. Then you remind him that without him there is no band because the band is a vehicle and

he's the driver of said vehicle (this metaphor applies to drummers as well). This is usually a last ditch effort in your attempts to persuade your bass player but in vain. It's time to go and post ads on "Musicians Wanted" pages.

Lessons taken from real life



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